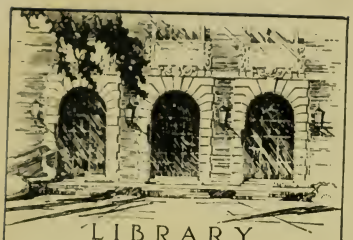

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CALEB STUKELY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CALEB STUKELY.

PART VI.

MY MOTHER'S LETTER.

"Once more unto the breach!"

Henry V.

For a week I remained in the chamber of death, the undisturbed companion of the breathless body. The face was leaden-hued, but a smile adorned it still, and the blow that had extinguished life had restored the ancient and appropriate calm, which, many days before, anxiety and disease of mind had carried off. At the week's close they buried him. Oh! Earth, thou art the enemy at last. It is thou who swallowest the treasure, never to give it back again in a form that we may recognize; thou who dividest us from the beloved, more truly and emphatically than the great adversary of life himself. I knew not half my loss, nursing and beguiling it from day to day at the bedside. *There* I might yet survey—*there* I had still possession of my

father. A new relationship had sprung up between us, and morning and evening, and at mid-day, blessed intimations of heavenly comfort were gathered upon my knees, reconciling me to the *spirit's* absence, whilst the human throbbings of my heart were stilled and cozened by the palpable presence of the decaying frame. Cold, cruel, pitiless earth!—deaf witness of my cries, cutting me off from him, my last and only friend, holding him in clammy and in fixed constriction—what cared you for the wild agony of the outstretched eye, staring upon the narrow spot that covered him?—What for the frantic and incoherent exclamations that expressed a loss and separation never felt but once in all their fulness, and never yet made known in human speech?

It was dark when I walked from the churchyard. I departed when the night permitted me no longer to distinguish the few sacred feet of soil from the thousand patches in which I had no interest. I returned to our abject lodging—never so abject, never so miserable, never so desolate as now. I had no wish to remain its tenant any longer. I passed a woful night there—now starting from a hideous dream, that clung to me through all the hours of sleep—now waking with a piercing cry, and now with eyes filled with bitterest tears; and in the morning, without delay, I took a willing leave of it for ever. The few valued memorials of my dear mother, which my father had snatched with such eagerness from the wreck, I had

been most reluctantly compelled to dispose of even before his death. We were penniless when the physician first visited us. The payment of his fee, and of the small arrear of rent, reduced the sum obtained for these precious relics to something like one guinea. The possessor of so much treasure, I stood now in the world alone, without a wish or hope, without a purpose or an aim. The daily diminution of my fund soon filled me with uneasiness and alarm, urging me, ineffectually enough, to think of some reasonable mode of obtaining my subsistence. Again I passed from house to house soliciting employment, and again I returned to my new and cheerless home, disappointed and chagrined. Stranger than any thing seemed this difficulty of obtaining hire for services that were offered at any price the purchaser would afford. How had the thousands of well-dressed and busy individuals whom I encountered at every turn, with happy and industrious looks—how had they contrived originally to fix themselves in their present lucrative positions? What secret power of accomplishing their wishes did they possess which I had yet to learn? Or was it, in truth, that every profitable hole and nook in the mighty city was filled up—pre-occupied and secured? I could not explain my misfortune, but I still wondered at it, and still was doomed to bear it. At length, and at no distant period, my purse was exhausted, and I was compelled to procure my food upon credit,

and to live on trust in my one small ill-furnished room. I had been careful, so long as my means permitted it, to pay my rent punctually at the close of every week. The landlord of the house, a labouring man, himself living in the parlour, had always treated me with great civility in consequence, and few words had passed between us. Whether it was that this good gentleman, during the week which I had permitted to pass away without the usual settlement, had observed a falling-off in my manner of living—had remarked that two scanty meals, and oftener one, had served me through the day—and, with such data, had arrived at a knowledge of my real position; or, whether the landlord in the same exigency adopted one line of conduct towards all his tenants without favour or reserve, I was not able to determine. Certain it is, three days of a second week had not elapsed before he deemed me worthy of a visit. I was glad to see him, and so I told him; but he spoke his business without returning my salute.

"Look'e, Mr Stukely," said the man of rooms, "I don't mean no offence; and if I am plain-spoken, I am none the worse for that. You owe me one week's rent—next Monday you'll owe me two. If you have no likeliwoods of paying me, only say so like a man."

I blushed and could not speak.

"If you are regularly done up, you had better owe me a fortnight than four months, I can tell you.

Speak in time—it's all I ask, and then I sha'n't be hard. You are out of work, I see?"

"Yes," I answered.

"And are likely enough to keep so?"

"Yes," said I again.

"And you haven't got a blessed farden?"

I nodded in the negative.

"Of course—as nat'ral and as reg'lar as the rule of three. It's Pill Garlick's luck again—it's just like me—I'm in for it again. Now, young fellow, we'll make short work of this. If you pays on Monday, —well and good—and we goes on again, like friends and pitchers; if you can't, tip me the key, give me the room, take yourself off, and I'll cry quits, and give you a bob to begin life again. If you haven't the stuff, it's plain you can't give it; but I'm blessed if it's a good speculation to keep on at the price. You *are* done up, you see. Now, I aint just yet, and don't want to be."

There was a man, a member of Trinity College, to whom, during my residence in the university, I had, in more ways than one, rendered signal service. He knew it, at least in prosperous days he had acknowledged it, and had evinced a willingness to make a suitable return. Even as my landlord spoke, his repeated grateful recognitions returned upon my memory, and I decided in my difficulty to implore from him a temporary loan of money. Satisfied that from such a man I could not meet with a refusal, I replied

to my landlord in the following terms:—"I am very grateful to you, Mr Thompson, for your kind offer. I trust I shall not need to take advantage of it; but rest assured, you shall suffer no further trouble or loss upon my account. It is true I am not in a condition to pay you, nor am I in the way of earning a single halfpenny. But I do believe sincerely that I have a friend who will not see me want. I will write to him by this night's post, and request his answer by return. He will remit me immediately more than sufficient to discharge your debt. Should he fail, although I have no fear of such a thing, I will go, as you require, on Monday next, or, if you wish it, on an earlier day."

"No, no," answered Thompson, eagerly, "not before. I'm a man of my word—I'm devilish sorry for you—that's the truth; for I am sure, by the way you talk, you have not been used to this here sort of thing. You have had an eddication, too, I can see; but, let me tell you, it's deuced hard upon me. Here I have a wife and ten children, and my old woman's always going to bed; and here have I five-and-forty pounds a-year to pay for this ramshackled dungeon; and here are my lodgers invariably paying me five shillings in the pound—never more than one week out of four; and here's the tax-gatherer a-coming before I know where I am; and here's wages at the shop coming down, 'cause business is slack; and here's clothes to buy for the young uns; and the doctor to

pay for missus; and the baker with bread a-rising, 'cause there's a war. No, I pity you, Mr Stukely, but we must take care of ourselves. I sha'n't worry you; but if you can't get the money—God knows, it's very hard to get any how—just give us the key to let in them as can. You had better see what you can do—try and get work—don't depend upon your friends—friends is a misery to a fellow. I never knew 'em to give—they are the chaps as takes. Try what you can do for yourself; and as I said before, if you can't do nothink at all, wait till Monday week"——

"Until Monday," said I, interrupting him.

"Don't interfere. I know very well what I said—wait till Monday week, an' welcome; and then, money or no money, hand us over the key, and do the best you can—that's what we must all do at last—and there's an end of it." And saying these words he slapped his hands with some violence on the table, and departed immediately. Not until he had reached his own room did I discover that the slapping was a species of legerdemain, performed for the purpose of placing half-a-crown upon the table for my benefit, but without my knowledge. I proceeded to my letter, a sceptic in respect of the tales which I had so often heard touching hard-hearted landlords. I did not conceal the state of my affairs from my good friend, Myddleton. I explained to him that my father had died, and had left me in the world penniless. I pictured to him my present terrible situation—related

to him the scene that had taken place with Thompson, and conjured him by the friendship which had formerly existed between us, not to desert me at a moment when a little help might prove my very salvation. I was moderate in my demand. I asked the loan only of ten pounds. I could not fix the time of repayment, but I solemnly engaged to return it as soon as I obtained employment, and became master of the sum. Every term that might move a feeling heart to pity and to help—every appeal that friendship might receive and humanity respond to, I unhesitatingly employed. With some anxiety and interest I waited for the returning post. A hundred times before I had heard the postman's distinguishable knock, and little thought of the accumulated joy and misery of which he was the unconscious messenger. Now I honoured him for the dignity of his high office. I learned the usual hour of his entrance into the street, watched his arrival, and accosted him as soon as he appeared. Quickly, and somewhat angrily, he turned his letters over, and found———not one for Mr Stukely. Was I satisfied? Oh no! I was sure that he had passed the letter over—What was to be expected from the impatient motions of a testy man? He would come to my letter in its usual course, and I must wait, like other folks, quietly at home for its reception. Ah, I was right—there was the delicious double knock! I rushed to the street door. The letter was for Mr Watkins on the second floor. Two mornings passed.

The postman was as punctual as the sun. I performed the same excited part. I met with like success. Monday came. I thought no more of Myddleton, but I cursed myself for writing to the man. I was preparing for departure—whither to go, I neither knew nor cared. Reckless with regard to myself, I determined upon living no longer upon the charity of Thompson. Hark! the double knock again. Well, let them attend to it who are to profit by the summons—not I. What's that? Surely that's my name. *Hollo—stop there!* ——Thompson met me halfway on the stairs—There it was indeed—I knew the hand—oh, shame upon me! ungrateful and impatient ever—I had done injustice to the noble Myddleton. I broke the seal with vehemence. The letter was a long one—but there was no enclosure. Let us read. I read as follows:—

"Dear Stukely—I have long thought it to be my fault that our friendship and correspondence closed with our residence in Cambridge. I feel obliged to you for breaking the ice, and I do sincerely hope that we shall now occasionally hear from one another. I should say that you were not a little surprised some months ago upon seeing in the papers that I had been ordained by the Bishop of ———; and rather curious to know how the matter had gone off, and where your friend was fixed. I'll tell you all about it. Our old friend, Cripple of Corpus, who, you will recollect, went out at the commencement of your second and my third year, was directed by Archdeacon Heavy-

sides to look out for a curate. Cripple, of course, recommended me, and kindly prepared an application, which I copied out and sent. I was immediately accepted, and the Arch. hoped I would come down directly, look at the parish, and be introduced to the Bishop. I went—stayed up a week, and when I got home again, I had just ten days and a half to read my divinity up, and get into training before I could come to the scratch. However, every thing turned out remarkably well; Cripple put me up to the *viva voce*, and told me the Bishop's favourite authors. As for the Bishop, I don't exaggerate when I say he is one of the most gentlemanly men in the world—very kind and considerate, as I have reason to know, and one of the most simple-minded (Cripple calls it spoony-minded—but you know Cripple) men on the bench, or off it either—and very good-looking as well. I can assure you it is a very comfortable thing to have examinations over, and very glad was I when my ordination was finished. It is a very affecting service, and the sermon is awful. Chancellor Scollups preached it. Next thing to be done is the priest business, and then all's over. I am as yet only a deacon. Thank Heaven that's the last examination! and then sha'n't I breathe like a gold fish? By the by, perhaps you don't know that that word *priest* is a contraction of *presbyter*, afterwards *prester*, and then *priest*. I don't much like the word, because there's a black-looking rascal enjoying that title, and a bristly

head of hair, who walks about all day long trying to annoy my flock. A cunning dog he is! He has built a large school, and directly our church is over on Sunday he opens the doors, and delivers his lectures. Never mind. We are all right. The church was never better attended, and the opposition keeps up an excitement. But I'm sorry to say there's much to be done, especially as there is only one to do it, and that's me. There is no end to the parish, and some of the people won't know the only way to be saved, which is by coming to church, and so I am upon the everlasting run from morning to night. But '*nil nisi labori*,' as the ancient Romans have it. I preach once every Sunday. Last Sunday I preached for the pagans in Australasia, (you'll find Asia in any of the maps.) The collection was very good, L.2, 1s. 0½d., 7s. 6½d. of which were in coppers, which Archdeacon Heavysides says, in one of his sermons, he prefers seeing to gold, which I can't understand at all, and think must be a misprint! Heavysides and the Bishop, between ourselves, (don't mention it to any one,) don't pull very comfortably together. Heavysides says that the R. C. Church is the true apostolic. The Bishop says it's no such thing, but neither more nor less than '*the man of sin*,' and there I agree with him. Heavysides has got some queer notions, as you see above, touching the coppers. Oh! didn't I just give the priest a dig the other day? I gave out in the pulpit that I meant to preach, wind and weather permitting, (for we

shut up sometimes in the winter—it is so piercing cold,) a sermon on the text, '*Be not deceived.*' I winked at the same time to the congregation, and pointed to the schism shop, which you can see from the church, giving them to understand pretty well what I meant. Well, the next day—who should call in but Bristles himself, and he presses my hand, and smiles, and says he has paid me a visit just to explain the liberal terms upon which he means to carry on his school—'most liberal terms,' cries Bristles—'no religion whatever—reading, writing, and morals—that's all.'—Then I fired at him right and left, till he looked like a fool.—'I hope,' says he, 'we shall be friends.' 'What!' says I, 'friends with the Beast?—no; thank you, sir—nothing to do with you—come out of Babylon, will you?' 'Oh! you are for controversy, are you?' says he, 'Very well then, my lad;' and then we went at it till the fellow foamed at the mouth, and the nasty wretch spit in my face, when I thought it time for a gentleman to bring the discussion to a close, which I did, by ringing the bell, and ordering him out. He's what they call in France, a perfect Jesuit.—Wishing that our correspondence, now recommenced, may long continue,—

"Your faithful friend,

"Tom Myddleton.

"Coldblows, Hampshire."

"*P. S.*—By the way, the account you give me of

your circumstances is very shocking, and you have indeed been very much afflicted—I needn't tell you to be very careful of yourself. I wish sincerely that it were in my power to assist you even with a trifle. The poor in our parish would surprise you, and as for charities they are beyond belief—so I won't describe them. What a delightful thing it is to feel, as Archdeacon Heavysides says, that we are chastened for our good, and that it's all wise and proper! Oh, do think of that, my dear fellow!"

Thompson shortly made his appearance, but there was no need to inform him of the contents of this choice epistle. He read the pith and postscript in my dejected countenance. I could not conceal my agitation, and the swelling tears that would not be kept down. I proceeded in the packing of my one small trunk.

"Stay the other week," said Thompson bluntly, but evidently feeling for my situation:

"Why should I? I shall be no better off than I am now, and you have lost enough already. But I will pay you, Thompson, when I can—depend upon it."

"But you can't go into the street, man—that's impossible. You'll get into trouble, or be doing something—Bless my soul, it seems strange you can't find employment! What's your profession?"

How could I answer!

"Don't be ashamed to tell me. P'r'aps you are a

dancing-master. The last lodger as had your room was, and I catched him one morning dancing off afore breakfast without paying his rent—so I boned his fiddle for the money. I've got it below, if it's any use to you."

I was still silent.

"Haven't you got no relations?"

"Relations, Thompson?—why, yes—stay—where's that packet of my poor's mother? There's her cousin in Birmingham, to whom she gave me a letter when she parted with me. How could I have forgotten it!"

"Now, there's where I find fault with you!" exclaimed Thompson, half angrily on my own account, and half joyfully because of my brightening prospects. "You don't seem to know what you are about. Is it possible that a man without a penny in his pocket, should have his wits about him no better than a child? Why don't you go to them at once? If they are your own blood they can't see you starve."

"I'll write to-night."

"Ah! there you go again. Write! What's the use of writing? It's just the way with all of you. Have a bit of eddication, and you are never easy but when you are showing off your fine writing and crack-jaw spelling. Talk of the misery of not being able to read or write! I'm blessed if it ain't a privilege. There's many a fellow will put upon paper what he'd be ashamed or afraid to say like a trump to your face."

"That's all very good, Thompson; but how am I

to reach Birmingham penniless, as you justly describe me? I *must* write to them. At the same time I will forward my mother's letter, and beg them to send me money sufficient to convey me to them."

"Then, I can tell you, you'll do no good at all. Catch Brummagem sending money to buy himself an encumbrance. He'll make a hundred and fifty excuses to keep you away. I know the world better. First and foremost, you must find your way down to your uncle, or whatever he is. Tell him you have come, give him the letter—say plump 'you are starving,' set yourself down, and let him kick you out if he can. You are willing to work, and he must get you employment. I think I might manage it now. You'd be glad to travel by waggon, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, had I even the means for that."

"Well, but suppose I could find 'em. Or suppose I have a brother who takes the waggon to Coventry, and suppose we could get you first there, and afterwards to Brummagem, without any money at all. Finish your packing, and just let me have a word with the missus." The energetic Thompson departed, but quickly returned with Mrs Thompson this time in the rear. "They had settled my business," said Thompson, "with ease. His brother would start for Coventry that night—he'd take care to secure me a place in the wain, and he'd lend me a crown to buy provisions. If I got into work, he'd expect to be paid—but if I had still my old luck, why, he shouldn't

be ruined though he gave it to me. Isn't that right, old woman?" he asked in conclusion.

"Quite right, Thompson!" was his good lady's reply; "and do, for goodness' sake," she exclaimed, appealing to me, "give me those shirts to put tidy before you set out. There isn't a button on one of them. Oh, Thompson, what stockings too! Your relations will think you have been herding with heathens. Do give them here." And Mrs Thompson disordered my trunk, and took possession of every thing.

I joined these real friends at dinner: I partook of their tea. At night, when his labours were over, Thompson threw my trunk on his shoulders, and walked at my side to the Bull's Head, in Holborn. There we found the waggon lighted up and ready for moving. There likewise we found, less ready, the waggoner himself, whip in hand, smock-frocked, and drinking stirrup-cups indiscriminately with every member of the establishment. No time was to be lost. My introduction was short. Thompson whispered a word into the ear of his brother, packed me into the waggon, forced into my hand a bottle of cordial, and a lump of cold meat, then desiring me to write how I got on, he bade me take care of myself, and wished me a hearty good-night.

My heart knocked at my breast with grateful emotion as I watched the noble-spirited labourer running through the streets back to his own home—his genuine

palace—where his wife and little ones, conscious of his worth, proud of their possession, awaited him with joy and sweetest expectation. "Happy dispenser of domestic light and warmth, richer, in spite of all your daily cares, than you dream of or can understand, may Heaven forget me, if I forget this sympathy for a stranger, this help that you can ill afford to take from those whose hope of life, whose bread, depends upon your sinewy arm!" Heavily the waggon issued from the yard into the crowded thoroughfare, and tears, which none but the Invisible might see, in deepest thankfulness to that humble man, passed down my cheek—stopping my utterance. Why, ah why, to embitter and poison that most healthful stream, came driving upon my conscience noxious recollections of the irremeable past? Why returned upon my memory, with all the freshness and vigour of a new existence, scenes of a former time, that mocked me, whilst they forced me to consider and to contrast them with that in which I acted now?

What was the claim of this poor man—found but yesterday—great as I acknowledged it to be, compared with that which I had recognized in her—the beloved giver of my life—my lost and sainted mother? In what passionate terms had I expressed my illimitable love when she loosed me into the world unwillingly from her arms? What vows of enduring reverence and duty did I not invoke the Heavenly One to witness, consecrating every syllable with tears more

plenteous, hotter, and more innocent, than I had now to shed! How had I realized the abundant promise? Where was the fruit of all this goodly sowing? Sad, sad, and overwhelming recollection, dragging the crimson to my face, marking with derision and contempt every burst of fancied sensibility, every tear of visionary gratitude! Truly, I had learned a lesson never to be forgotten, and in my loneliness I conned it over, and closed my lips, and ceased my tears—convicted, humbled, and disgraced!

The fourth evening of our most tedious journey had for some hours closed upon us, when the waggoner to whom I had been transferred at Coventry, crawled with his ponderous machine, snailwise, into the town of Birmingham. Fatigued with the excess of physical repose, oppressed by constant mental agitation, I longed to throw myself at once into the arms of my sole remaining relatives. "Their hospitable reception," I thought, "their assuaging accents, their warm and feeling manner, all that I may confidently expect from those whose veins carry a portion of the blood which streamed originally in our common ancestor—would soothe at once my harassed spirits, and restore me to myself again." But the lateness of the hour, and my anxiety lest I should disturb a slumbering household, induced me to forego this personal indulgence. It was my duty to consider their comfort, however great would be their eagerness to embrace me, how deeply soever they might themselves regret

a delicacy which our relationship justified me in not observing. I accompanied the waggoner to the small inn at which he himself put up; and, for my last sixpence, obtained a slight refreshment and a portion of a bed, which, with six others, filled the meanest room of the public-house, and the one most distant from all that was creditable and proper to be seen in the place. The man who shared my straw for the night was old and palsied. He walked into the room shortly after me. The other travellers had retired to rest already, and were fast asleep. My temporary companion scarcely noticed me; but as he divested himself of his clothes—a process very long and painful to behold, by reason of his calamity, he muttered to himself and moaned exceedingly. At length he trembled into bed, and my flesh crawled and crept as he breathed, lying at my side. There is no extremity so desperate and gloomy as to forbid the glimmering of one small ray of hope and consolation, ever welling from the human heart. What so soon, so easily seduced and lulled to quiet as Despair itself? Would you extract the hidden virtue of a great affliction? Compare the sorrow with your neighbour's, and behold it shine. The old man murmured still in bed, and ere he closed his eyes, exclaimed in agony, "Where next—where next?—without a soul that knows me in the world, no friends, relations, money—God help me—nothing!" He groaned himself to sleep. Dismal were the moments with me; but oh, how different to this poor

wretch's state my fortunate position! One more night of misery, and in the morning I should be with loving friends, in health, and plenty would abound again. Daylight was about to drop the curtain on my sufferings, but to renew them for the paralysed, deserted, and unpitied beggar. The thought brought ease, and I slept in spite of the old man.

Loud was the clink of hammers, and louder the noise of anvils, as I sought my way through the close and narrow streets of Birmingham, seeking the dwelling-place of Mr Chaser. Busy were the looks of mortals, and business-like their gait. Men with brawny arms, plated with thick coats of dirt, met me at every turn, whilst higher mortals, full of bustle and assurance, jostled along with a perking pride of industry staring on their brow, that carried shame and terror to every idler on whom it chanced to fall. Idlers, in truth, there were very few. Indolence and pleasure were expelled from the streets, which were taken up entirely by an intense and concentrated assiduity, real in many instances, but assumed in not a few. As I walked through the close streets of Birmingham for the first time, I could have imagined —and without taxing my imagination largely—that I was once more trudging along the familiar ways of my own beloved *City*—dear in spite of—perhaps, BECAUSE of all that I had suffered in it—of all that I had lost and left there; but an accurate observer could not fail to be impressed with the conviction that the imitation was de-

fective, the assimilation incomplete. London, mighty London, gigantic, incomparable, and unapproachable, scarce noticeable was Birmingham's thin and thready current contrasted with the overwhelming flood that I have seen pressing along thy narrow, deeply-fretted channels! Inferior was the place in all respects. The very handicraftsmen were a less clean and neat, a paler and a sadder race, than that I had left behind me. Mr Chaser, my mother's cousin, was the owner of a foundery, situated in a smoke-dried lane. Attached to the works was a small house, in which resided the proprietor and his family. I reached the door, surveyed it for a moment, and sighed with apprehension. I touched the bell, and my heart palpitated when I heard it tinging through the house. The bell was not answered. For a quarter of an hour I stood expectant, lacking the courage to ring again. At last I ventured. At the close of another quarter of an hour, and after a third appeal, the door was opened. A young man, pale and sickly-looking, stood before me. He was in his shirt sleeves. His hands and arms were smeared with patches of dirt, and his face, from which perspiration was falling thickly, matched them. His eyes were of a light blue colour, and deeply sunk in his head. He fixed them on the ground, from which fact you might possibly infer that he was modest and bashful, if the sinister and villanous expression of the rest of his features did not prove him at

once to be as *whiteliver'd* and vicious, as he was blue-eyed and whitefaced.

"Did you ring before?" he enquired in a surly tone, and without deigning to look at me.

"I did," I answered, with some *hauteur;* "and I desire to speak with your master."

"What do you mean, stupid, by master?" was the elegant reply. "Here, come in," he continued. "Curse the door—this is how half the work gets spoilt. He may find somebody else to be porter, or else a better man to stand at the forge. Well, come in, can't you? Who are you? What's your business?"

"Does Mr Chaser live here?" I asked.

"Why, of course he does—you know that as well as I do—didn't you say just now you wanted to see him?—why, what the devil do you mean?"

With these words I was ushered, or rather pushed, into a room that opened into the passage, and was within a few yards of the street door. The pale-faced youth departed. Who was he? Surely not a relative of Mr Chaser's? His son, for instance? Oh, Heaven forbid! I had scarcely time to notice two red-coloured prints upon the wall—representations of *Industry* and *Idleness*—before a heavy footstep warned me to prepare for the bodily presence of Mr Chaser himself. My pulse leaped higher and higher as the affecting moment of our interview drew near. How

delighted he would be to receive me! He had never seen me before. Twenty years had elapsed since he last beheld my mother. How he would grieve to hear of her death! How bitterly would he regret the angry words which had passed between him and my father, giving rise to the family quarrel which followed so soon afterwards—severing them entirely from one another. A fat, unshaven gentleman walked in, and I retreated involuntarily a pace or two. He also was without a coat. An air of unmitigated vulgarity pervaded the whole man, and I prayed internally that the fleshy bulk constituted Mr Chaser's foreman. He spoke —the accent was provincial—"Well, young man, and what do you woant with me?"

"Mr Chaser, sir?" I asked, too well assured already.

"Yes; you've hit it," he answered with a grin. "I are Chaser, and I are awful busy, too, so I'll thank you to make haste."

"You are connected, sir, I think, with a family of the name of Stukely," (I looked in vain in Mr Chaser's eye for some glad token of acknowledgment,) "lately resident in London?" I continued in dismay.

"Well, and whoat of that, my man? If you have any claim on that there estate, you should see the assignees. I can't help you. I haven't seen the man for twenty years, and I doan't know nothing on his affairs. My only wonder is, he warn't in the *Gazette*

a score of years ago—a sleepy-headed, obstinate, old stupid ass."

"I am his son, sir," I answered quickly—trembling with indignation. "He is in his grave—you must not speak so of him."

"Whoat!" he exclaimed, seemingly surprised, but laughing very loud, "be you the chap as went to college to be made a parson on, and to learn extravagance, as if they didn't teach it fast enough at home? Nice notions them for working people! I say," he added, tipping me what I supposed to be the true Brummagem wink, "it was hardly fair upon the creditors to be filling your pockets up there when he knew he was a-going to break. I've heard it all. We are not asleep, you see. And so the old man's dead! But he has taken care of you, I reckon?"

"I do not understand you, sir."

"Oh, doan't you?" said he, looking very cunning. "Well, then, perhaps you'll tell me whoat you have come to ask of me?"

"Nothing," I answered, determined at that moment, if I died afterwards of want, not to become indebted to Mr Chaser for a sixpence.

"Noathing?—that's queer at any rate. Well—your mother's dead, I hear. A pretty match she made of it at last! I toald her how it would be—and so did every body else. A good woman, too, was Mary. I loiked your mother. Many a frolic I are had with her when we were youngsters. She was a tender-

hearted creature. I wonder she never wrote to me; but if she had, I dare say I shouldn't have answered her, for I hate writing, and I couldn't bear your father."

Disgusted as I had become in this short space of time with Mr Chaser, his affectionate remembrance of my mother extracted all viciousness from the aversion with which I looked upon him. Furthermore, his mention of my dear mother's name recalled her last sad interview with me—her latest wish—my own solemn promise to her, and I felt that I dared not withhold the letter which I had engaged to place in Mr Chaser's hands. In many things I had crossed the nearest wishes of her heart. The only compensation that I could offer to her memory was a compliance with her strict injunction. What if a shrinking sense of vexation and of shame irritated me, and sought to hold me back? What if, in entreating aid from such a man, I suffered pangs far more severe than any the wide and open world could inflict upon me. It was reasonable and just. The retribution had commenced. It was proper that I should suffer. I placed the letter on the table.

"And whoat do you call that there?" enquired Mr Chaser, as I did so.

"A letter from my mother, addressed to you, sir, and written many months ago."

"And whoy, in the name of goodness, didn't you

send it by the post before? That's cheap and expeditious like."

"Read it, sir," I answered.

"Noa, do you read it to me. I should loike to hear a college chap. That must be foine—cut on."

I was sick at heart; but I performed my penance faithfully, and read on. It was a long epistle; such as I expected it to be. First, it reverted, and most feelingly, to the distant days which they had passed together, nurtured and brought up under one roof—but soon it flew to its main object, that of securing for me a home when my own should have passed away. She implored her cousin to receive me, and informed him that her deathbed would be made easy by the assurance she would have in her last moments of his ready agreement with her wishes.

"Well, I are glad of that, at all events," said Chaser, when I had finished.

"Of what, sir?" I enquired.

"Of her dying easy and assured; because whatever happens now can make no difference to her. I doan't see what I can do for you. My lads have done their schooling, and I are too old to learn myself. You put up for a schoolmaster, I suppose?"

"I think, sir, I could teach the rudiments."

"Can you make a pair of breeches?"

"A pair of breeches!"

"Yes—boots, or any thing that's useful? You

doan't expect *me* to keep you like a gentleman at college, do you? The lads are wanting clothes. If you were a tailor, now, you might have the job."

"I am willing to work, sir," I replied, "and am ready to learn; and I come to you only in obedience to my mother's commands. If you can help me, and wish to help me, a little ridicule, and a few harsh words, shall not prevent my accepting a favour at your hands."

"I doan't know what you mean by that exactly. I suppose it's sarce. D—n it, beggars shouldn't be sarcy, any how!"

My acquaintance with Mr Chaser would at this moment have been brought to an abrupt conclusion, if the sudden appearance of a lady had not permitted the train of angry words, that had already taken fire on my tongue, to go out without explosion. The lady was finely dressed; she presented a marked, and I thought at first, a favourable contrast to the two male beasts with whom it had been my unlucky fate to engage on this eventful morning. She was bedizened in a highly coloured gown, and a pink turban adorned a reddish head of hair. Her person was short and thin, and she had a small face with pinched-up features. Her mouth was very small indeed by nature, but art was reducing its dimensions daily. Could she live long enough, the time would arrive at length for its closing up and disappearance altogether. It will have been observed that in the language and deport-

ment of the gentlemen, there had appeared a *slight* uncouthness, an utter absence, in fact, of the polished ways and forms of life—those smiling agents, who, on the shortest notice, so courteously and so ably occupy the place of friendship—herself too sacred for undistinguishable mixing in the world. This obvious fault it was the lady's anxious effort to improve. Her method was a pretty one. As I have said, she screwed and drew her mouth into the smallest and genteelest shape, and words fit only for a lady's lips struggled through it, cut and polished, and qualified for ears as royal as a queen's. What could display high breeding better than such a mouth and such speech? True it is, that in the process of refining, some words were clipped and maimed, shorn of a few proportions. But much might be forgiven where the intention was so good as Mistress Chaser's. Was it her fault that *V* and *W* would still play masquerade upon her tongue —that *V*eal was *W*eal, and *W*ashing *V*ashing? Was she to blame if some independent and unnatural *H* would at momentous periods be absent without leave; and could she be answerable if he appeared again just when absenteeism was most devoutly to be wished? How willingly would she have kept the unruly alphabet in order, had it been permitted her! What but an obedient alphabet did she need, in order to become a perfect model of good manners and elegant deportment? Mr Chaser introduced me in his own offensive manner to the fine lady, and took his leave

immediately, informing me, as he departed, that it was very plain I could be of no use to him—there was nothing I could do in the shop, and therefore he could be of no possible service to me. He thought, as I had travelled from London on purpose to see him, that I might as well stay that day to dinner; if I did so, he promised to introduce me to as fine "a set of cheaps as had ever grown out of loins, though every one had earned his living since he was ten year old, and ne'er a soul of the lot had ever been to college." He grinned and left me.

The plaited lips then opened slightly, and a few syllables escaped them. "You are, I presume, the relative of Mr Chaser?"

"*My mother* was, ma'am," I replied, waiving all personal claim to that high honour.

"He is a noble character, is he not? The true John Bull—the Englishman. There is no *hart* about him—none at all."

"Very little ma'am, I think," I answered most sincerely.

"You have been introduced to Master William, have you not?"

"I have not been so fortunate."

"He told me that he had spoken to you."

"I have seen no one, ma'am, but Mr Chaser, and the man who came to the street door."

"That man, as you design him, *was* dear Master

William. He is our eldest boy—and is at the head of the '*rough*' department."

"Where then presided Mr Chaser?" thought I, at once smiling from the very depths of my misery.

"You shall see all the boys at dinner, Mr Stukely. As Mr Chaser said in his queent way, they are as fine a set of children as ever you beheld."

"Have you many of them, ma'am?"

"I have *h*eight." Every one superintends one department—so that all our eyes is always on our men."

I began to think of my prospects, and to consider my next movements. I spoke mechanically to Mrs Chaser—hardly aware of my questions, or conscious of her replies.

"Have you any daughters, ma'am?" I asked, for want of a better question.

"One, Mr Stukely—Miss Eliza. She is now at ome for the olydays.—Do you hear that—listen!"

"What, ma'am?"

"The dear at her piano. Miss Eliza is twelve years old—she will be quite accomplished. She has a fortune from my father of her own—quite hindependently of Mr Chaser. She is a parlour boarder, sir."

"No doubt, ma'am."

"You shall see her, Mr Stukely. She is a simple-minded creature—all life and nature. I will call her

—Miss Eliza—Miss Eliza!" bawled the good lady from the bottom of the stairs.

There was a loud giggle in reply, and nothing more.

"She is such a timid creature. I must fetch her. —Pardon me."

The lady curtsied and vanished from my presence, with a dignity, which, cut up in little, would have furnished handsomely a dozen families. For a few minutes I stood in active expectation of the threatened visitation. It did not come. By degrees I ceased to look for it, and at last I let it pass from my remembrance altogether. My mind had weightier thought to bear, and it came with fearful pressure. What was I to do?—whither flee next for help? The last, the only hope, was dissipated. The anchor to which I had fondly held, dreaming of stability and security, had slipped from my clutch, and had cast me hopelessly adrift. I felt the hot blood mounting to my cheek and brain, as I took courage to look with steadiness upon my isolated, desperate condition. The room grew too confined; it was with difficulty I breathed, and I rushed into the open air. "Never," I vowed, "should that inhuman door be closed again upon me." But I walked afterwards for three hours through the long streets of the strange town, and again and again I found myself before the only dwelling that contained human creatures who knew me, to whom I could speak—and I was inclined to ring the bell again—to obtain admittance—ask advice—seek

aid. Twenty times, pride, anger, and disgust, interposed to restrain my steps, and to protect me against further insult—if not from further suffering and sorrow. Weakness, inclination, the fear of starvation, of a horrid death from hunger—these were in the opposite balance, and I was content at length to submit to new mortification—to deeper self-abasement. The man had asked me to his table. Who knew what would arise from such a meeting—what sparks of generosity and tender feeling might be elicited from the social board? It was due to my poor mother to make one more attempt. This idea had not occurred to me before. I was glad to find it rising thus to check the dangerous tendency of my evil passions—passions that ever repay indulgence by treachery and betrayal. Emboldened by the instigation of a virtuous principle, sustained by its presence, once more I visited my relatives.

PART VII.

FRIENDS AND RELATIONS.

Sir Giles Overreach.—We worldly men, when we see friends and kinsmen
Past hope, sunk in their fortunes, lend no hand
To lift 'em up, but rather set our feet
Upon their heads, to press 'em to the bottom.
A New Way to Pay Old Debts.

It was twelve o'clock at noon when I again breathed the smoky but grateful atmosphere of my relative's habitation. The dinner party which I had been invited to join was already assembled, and at once, and without ceremony, I was admitted to a private view of the complete and graceful group of Chasers. It is proper for me here to state, that the obese brass-founder—Chaser, senior—was a man of wealth. He had ten thousand pounds in cash, of which a parental government kindly took the charge, thereby relieving him from much solicitude and many restless nights, and for which he held securities, the most secure that could be found; the foundery and the dwelling-house had long since become his own; that unobtrusive row

of houses in the adjacent alley that bore the burden of a line of workshops, and contained a little world of petty renters, were content to call him owner; and in the main street opposite a good-sized house or two, just raised and hardly finished, were indebted to him for their existence. Nor were these all. Three miles from Birmingham, where smoke and dirt were not, but in their place a broad expanse of sky, a wholesome air, hedges, trees, and shrubberies, there was a field of rising ground, and on the hillock's centre were springing up the solid glories of a suburban palace. Here, likewise, the teeming forge of Mr Chaser supplied the mind and muscle, the stone and brick-clay that were engaged in rearing to its height the noble structure. Whether the opulent owner proposed to end his days here, or built his castle on speculation, and in the way of business only, I cannot say. Such particulars as I have communicated to my worthy reader, I learned from Thomas, the intelligent ostler of the Sun, at which I had slept; and in the inference I drew from the good news was, that notwithstanding all the grossness and vulgarity of my man of *metal*, he enjoyed a laudable relish for those choice palatable delicacies of life which he could so well afford to purchase, and which after all are not to be despised by poor and hungry men. With this consoling, animating thought, and with an appetite roused and sharpened by long exercise, I approached his table.

I entered the long passage, and passed into the

small kitchen at its extremity, and there, in various parts of it, sat, stood, reclined, and lolled, the interesting family. Dinner had commenced, and all were eating. A deal table, relying upon three legs placed at unequal distances from the centre, being small, was appropriated, as was just, to Mrs Chaser and her spouse. Under the shadow of a door, and in a corner, seated on a stool, knife in hand, I caught the figure of the blue-eyed youth—the eldest son, and supervisor of the *rough* department. As great men carry their business-habits into the retreats of life, so did my ancient friend appear to adorn the domestic hearth with graces borrowed from his peculiar occupation. Still uncoated, and still covered with black honours conferred upon him by the smithy—still turning his pale and inauspicious countenance from your gaze, silent and unobservant he sat, reducing to their original elements a monstrous *hunch* of bread torn from the loaf, and an endless surface of fried bacon, ravished from the flitch. Reclining against the above-mentioned door, and similarly employed, was a youth by a year or two the junior of my friend. His face was, like his brother's, *white*, but, unlike his, good-humoured. The heavy monotony of beans and bacon was relieved, on the part of this young gentleman, by a lively exhibition of grotesque grimaces, performed apparently for the improvement and delight of invisible spectators in the yard aforesaid. A bench was fixed against the wall. Here sat in company a pair of juvenile

Chasers; in company as respects their bodies and the swallowing of the beans, but as to conversation, friendly exchanges, and the like, as far asunder as the poles. One dish supplied the two. They eat with little modesty or reserve, each against the other —both against time. One boy, the last male Chaser present, had a seat at the dresser with Ebenezer, the apprentice—a strange lad, of whom I shall have to speak at some length hereafter. This hopeful twig (not Ebenezer, but his messmate) diversified the moments by mischievous attempts to rob the poor apprentice of any little comfort that he could get in such a family, and from such a meal. Now he called his attention to some curious phenomenon in the room, and took the opportunity to dig a fork into his bacon, and so *bone* it. Now he acted with his feet certain evolutions beneath the table, causing the boy to writhe, to stoop, to rub his legs. Then vanished from his plate beans by spoonsful. The victim said nothing, but bore the molestation with a meekness amounting to a fault. Very sorrowful he looked, and intimate with trouble. The canker had already galled the early promises of his spring—if the promise flower can ever shoot and grow in poverty's unsunned, neglected garden. There is little more to be noticed in this exclusive dining-room. "Miss Eliza" sat upon her father's knee, over against her mother. The young lady was the latest produce, and being on that account the best beloved, was, according to a sound

philosophy, neglected, spoiled, and ruined. Her hair was very red, her face freckled, and her behaviour froward and most insolent. She assisted her parent's deglutition by a constant pulling at his whiskers; and her parent submitted to the infliction without a murmur, like a wise man as he was, in the presence of one greater than he. With joy be it said, as with unbounded delight I remarked, that the overbearing Chaser himself was but a humble subject in his own house, under the despotic government of his own wife. An appropriate servant-girl professed to clean some dishes at a sink. I did not believe her. Yet charity hopeth all things, and is therefore bound to hope that even the dirtiest person, and the blackest water, and the foulest sink, may contrive, between them, to achieve a miracle. There was little ornament in the room except upon the ceiling. This was tastefully decorated with hams and sides of bacon, which were no doubt greatly improving in flavour under the treatment of sundry flies and blue-bottles, who passed the summer months here, and gave their best attention to the food in question.

Nobody thought fit to notice me. Before I had time to say a word, the eldest son rose from his seat and sighed. "That's done," said he, and then, without another word, departed. "Hollo there, Bill!" cried the father, calling him again; "how get you on? Do you want me, lad?"

"No," replied the son. "I've set the men on Brownlow's work. They won't be done afore to-morrow at dinner-time."

"What have you done with Gruel, Bill?"

"Gove him the sack," said Bill, "on Saturday night. I see'd how it was with him. He's going to break up all at once like Shivers did, and then we should have another wife and family hanging on again for months. I wasn't a bit too soon with Gruel, I can tell you. He's in the horspittle by now."

"Very well, Bill," said Mr Chaser in a voice of contentment. "Any thing else?"

"Yes, very well indeed, my dear," added Mrs Chaser herself, "and very careful of your father's interest; but recollect, Master William, you have not yet said *grace*, and how often have I told you that no blessing can accompany our best actions if we neglect"——

"Oh, bother!" cried Bill, interrupting her, and taking his leave at the same time.

A general laugh succeeded. All bore a part in it but the sad apprentice. When it subsided, Mr Chaser was polite enough to turn to me.

"There, sit down, lad," said he. "Take that seat of Bill's. What has kept you all this time? I was in hopes—I was afeard, I mean, that you had gone home again. Wanted to look about you, eh? I say, Molly"——

"Oh!" shrieked the lady, trying very hard and ineffectually to blush. "Fie, Mr Chaser, fie! Remember we are not alone. *Mary*, my dear."

"Well, Mary, my dear, is all them beans gone? Is that there bit of bacon cold? because if it ain't, just give it to the boy, and if it are, let Susan brile another rasher."

"It's not *quite* cold," said the imaginative and economic Mrs Chaser.

"More it ain't!" exclaimed her husband, planting the back of his fat hand upon it to be convinced. "There, enjoy yourself a bit," continued he, putting the savoury morsel in my hand. "You must be rare and hungry. Fill your belly, and then I'll hear all you have got to say."

A bright remembrance of a delicious day passed in Cambridge, spent in honourable toil, when the unknown future was arrayed in all the apparel of a gorgeous fancy—stole suddenly upon me. The feelings of that day—the soft contentment, pure satisfaction—the fond and pardonable pride—the feelings and the incidents of that day, vivid and clear, were here in Chaser's kitchen. How, why, or when they come, who shall tell me? They pierced, and penetrated, and left me quickly as they had come, with the warm blood gushing from my stricken heart.

I held my plate in silence, sitting on the stool, surveying the cold bacon, but for the moment thinking of nothing less.

"Oh, it isn't good enough, isn't it?" said Chaser, looking at me all the time. "I don't doubt you are used to better, but don't despise your wittles. What, ain't you done yet?" he exclaimed, turning upon the apprentice. "Ebenezer—this won't do, my lad. Come, missus, call upon Ebenezer for his grace."

Ebenezer's knife and mouth were in juxtaposition.

"Now, Master Ebenezer, if you please," said his mistress solemnly, "put your knife down. '*For what*' ——Go on."

Poor Ebenezer dropped his knife, and mumbled something very indistinctly about his "thankfulness;" for what, or to whom, it was impossible to gather. He also took his leave.

There is no arguing with a healthy and determined hunger. It has no moral perceptions. Offended to the quick by my cavalier and disdainful reception, incensed at the free and easy mode of Mr Chaser, his domineering behaviour and address, I vowed internally to taste none of the food that could not be offered to me with a better grace. But an internal vow! Heaven help it in a struggle with an internal *growl!* Snow before the meridian sun! a syllabub before a giant! I hated Mr Chaser, I hated his family, I hated the meanness and depravity of human nature, my own nature, myself; but I devoured beans and bacon with avidity, and having finished them, and appeased the animal craving, I became vexed and miserable indeed. Long before I had concluded my repast, three Chasers

made a simultaneous rush to the sink, where, turning on the spout which admitted water, they participated in one short and incomplete ablution. Six hands, of different size and shape and colour, were thrust under the tap, catching what liquid they might in the general *mêlée*. A second rush towards a family jack-towel, suspended on a thundering roller behind the kitchen door, and more startling than the first by reason of that roller; and a third rush, out of the room and into the open yard, completed with a fine *effect* another act of the performance. Very gratifying to my vanity, and flattering to my feelings, was the marked attention of my young and new-found relatives.

Of the male offspring there remained now in the room only the facetious performer on his own face—evidently his father's favourite. There was an air of independence and low assurance about this youth—the result of an unlimited and fatal indulgence—that was offensive in the highest degree. His enviable privilege it seemed to banter and expose to ridicule the venerable author of his existence—favoured child! The sire's ambition, and vain pride it was, to be the subject of the hopeful's sallies—sapient father! If, on my arrival in Birmingham, I had entertained a hope of becoming the book-keeper, clerk, or accountant of Mr Chaser, and if, even whilst sitting on the stool and swallowing my dinner, that hope at intervals still stole forth, faintly and indistinctly glimmering, it

was effectually extinguished during the short conversation that was now about to take place.

" Well, Tom," said Mr Chaser, smiling.

" Well, old gentleman," replied the son, smiling also.

" Ha, ha, ha !" continued the father, struck comical by the repartee, and laughing outright.

" Ha, ha, ha !" rejoined the son, imitating him, and laughing outright also.

" Don't, Tom, don't !—there's a good fellow," cried old Chaser imploringly, and shaking all over; " take care—don't—I am *so* full !"

" Well, I won't, old gentleman; but I say, do tell what's-his-name here [a polite reference to me] that story about you, and mother, and the bandbox."

" Master Thomas—Master Thomas !" interposed Mrs Chaser, frowning a reproof.

" Ah, that's right ! Molly, stop him—do. Let my wittles settle, Tom."

" Come, go it, father," continued Tom, urging him on, and taking no notice of his mother's remonstrance. " Begin at the old place—' *When missus and I was a-courting.*' "

" Did you hear me, Master Thomas ?" enquired the lady in a louder tone.

" *She persuades me one day to walk into a hay-field,*" said Tom, proceeding in the narrative.

" How can you sit there laughing, Mr Chaser ?"

asked Mrs Chaser, very angry indeed, "encouraging your son in this family *exposy?*"

"Oh—oh—oh!" groaned Chaser in convulsions.

"*Now Molly's wind was none of the best,*" continued Tom.

"Miss Eliza, Miss Eliza!" exclaimed Mrs Chaser, with feelings wounded to the quick, but still with all her dignity, "leave your parent's knee this minute. I cannot suffer you to breathe this tainted atmospear. Mr Chaser, I am shocked at your behaviour. Miss Eliza, come." *Exeunt* Mrs Chaser and Eliza.

"Oh!" cried Chaser, wiping down his forehead, "I are puffed for certain. We have put our foot in it now, Tom. Get along, you dog, and look to *business!*" It was a talismanic word, and sobered Mr Chaser quickly. In a moment again the poetry of life was dissipated, and he was the brassfounder and the proprietor of the suburban mansion. "I are not going to be bamboozled by *Uphill* any longer. Have you wrote him to say so, Tom?"

Merry and jocose as was Master Tom, even in his ill-regulated mind joking was held subordinate to the important consideration of "the main chance."

"Haven't I, though?" he said, in answer to his father's question. "I wish you had seen the letter."

"What did you say to the thief?" asked the parent, working himself up to an intense hatred of the unfortunate Mr Uphill.

"Oh, the humbug! I gave it him well," answered

Tom, stirring up the caldron of unholy passions. "His bill's due on Monday; he offered fifty pounds to meet it, and the other fifty in a fortnight's time. I told him we had done that for him once afore, and wasn't going to do it again. If he couldn't pay regularly he shouldn't buy the goods, and, as he had bought 'em, he must bide the consequences. If he failed to pay the bill on Monday, the lawyer must certainly have a touch at him on Tuesday."

"Did you say, Tom, that I was out of pocket by the whole transaction?"

"Leave me alone for that. In course I did."

"It was very lucky, Tom, we got him to take that old metal off our hands when we renewed his bill. We should never have sold it else. It wasn't worth the price of carriage, and he paid for it handsomely."

"Yes, you can't grumble there, I think, old gentleman—something like a hundred per cent, I reckon."

"Did you write to him that I hadn't a sixpence of ready money in the house, and that lots of bills were coming due on Tuesday?"

"Why, to be sure I did. I wrote the usual thing, only with a little more of spice for the occasion."

"What have you done with the five hundred pounds as was remitted from America this morning?"

"It's in the desk."

"Then pay it, Tom, at once into the bank. We've got nothing to pay away this month, have we?"

"Nothing but the wages."

"What's your next job, Tom?"

"Oh, don't break your heart—I've lots to do! There's no fear of rust in this house. I ain't begun the books yet, but them's soon done. There's only two months to enter up. Why did you ask?"

"Nothing pertikler. I want a pipe, Tom."

Tom directed his steps to a cupboard, one of the innumerable conveniences with which this small kitchen was crowded. From it he drew forth a well-used clay pipe, and a home-made box of burnished brass containing the tobacco.

"I say, father," he said in a half whisper, lighting the pipe which he had previously filled, "do tell the Londoner here your wonderful story about mother and the bandbox."

"Get out, you rascal!" replied his father, threatening to throw a plate at his head. Tom caught his father's hand, caused the plate to fall to smash, and then with an extraordinary grimace, performed especially for this occasion, took instantly his leave. There was no doubt of this lad's being the genius of the family, and head of the *literary* department. If matters had worn a more favourable aspect, and my reception had been of the most satisfactory nature, the only situation that I could possibly fulfill in this establishment was already occupied by a principal, the possessor of powers which I might in vain attempt to emulate or acquire. There was no home for me with Mr Chaser; and, alas, alas!

there was no home for me in the wide and populous world. I rose from my seat.

"What! are you off?" enquired Mr Chaser, in a voice that fully expressed his wishes in the matter.

"I was thinking, sir"——

"Well, don't hurry for a minute. I'll hear all you have got to say. What is it you expect? What are you fit for? Now let's here all about it?" Mr Chaser fixed himself cosily and comfortably in his chair, crossed his legs, puffed his pipe, and prepared himself with a true patronising air for any thing I had to communicate. I sat down again, and after a desperate struggle with my better self, I resolved to take my opportunity, and to engage all the energy I possessed in one last tremendous effort to move the man to succour and befriend me. I coughed, and hemmed, and took the necessary measures for a long oration—my auditor was all attention. I felt that my only chance of prevailing with my antagonist, was by compelling his mind to dwell upon the memory of my lost mother—by speaking of their early intercourse—by calling up a point in his existence when his soul was fresher—his heart less fortified by the bulwarks which an educated selfishness—miscalled worldly *wisdom*—had set up against mankind. I spoke to him of her many sorrows, the untimely loss of all her offspring, her fears, anxieties, and endless watchings at my infant cradle. I spoke to him of her unbounded love, her

self-denial, and her long endurance. I told him how she had ventured her little all of earthly happiness to secure my affection, that was her right—my present and eternal good, which she lived to forward—how she had lost her venture, and how the loss of it had beggared, ruined, and destroyed her. Nor did I forget to convey to him, in terms which I deemed irresistible, a faithful narrative of our leave-taking. I described her silent vigil at my bedside—her forbearance whilst I slept—her tender regard when I awoke; graphically I pictured the affecting scene that followed. I mentioned the warnings which she had received from the old nurse—her firm belief in the woman's prophecies —the dark forbodings of evil which visited her spirit, and oppressed her with a painful sense of apprehension as the hour of separation approached. Then, in the liveliest colours, I painted the gladness and the joy that animated her fair bright countenance, when she in thought resigned me to the protection of her dear relative—absent but not forgotten in the lapse of years; remembered and confided in as the tried and faithful friend of old—the companion of her youth. "In obedience to her command, sir, I have come to you," were my concluding words. "In compliance with the desire that strove in her heart, when every other worldly wish was disregarded or dismissed. Disobedient in many things, I obey her last injunction. I appear before you, recommended by her dying breath, and by the memories which attach you to the departed.

I am no idler. I would not depend upon your charity for my daily bread. It is in your power, no doubt, to procure me employment in this large, busy town. Your influence must be, from your position, important; I ask, entreat you, to use that power, to employ that influence, for the child of your lost friend and cousin—once beloved and cared-for, according to your own acknowledgment. You shall find me but too glad to labour for my existence in any condition of life. Do not think that I have gone through the burning fires of the past without some purifying—some improvement. To toil and to sweat is the universal lot. Happy am I to be set free with no harder punishment. Put me in the way of an humble, honourable independence—it is all I ask—and I will thank and bless you."

For the first few seconds Mr Chaser hearkened to my recital with great respect. Then he altered his position in the chair, turned his back upon me, and listened apparently with an attention riveted to every word. I noticed the refreshing change; I perceived that I had struck at length a human chord—my heart leaped at the brightening prospect, my tongue took courage, and warmed with animating sounds. Soon the pipe was forgotten, and it dropped neglected on his knee, whilst his big head fell sadly on his shoulders. What! had I reached and shaken the old man's heart of iron, and did the favourite pipe give place so readily to my poor cause! Oh! force of

natural eloquence, not to be resisted by the mightiest when thou comest on the wings of passion and with the strength of Truth! I concluded my address.—The man was vanquished. He did not move a limb—a muscle—he did not breathe. Was it shame for his previous undeserved and cruel treatment of me?—was it sorrow and remorse that held him thus silent and breathless? Had I set bleeding afresh some ancient and half-cicatrized ulcer of the mind? Was conscience still so tender in this rough-hewn case? I had indeed achieved a victory, not more glorious for the conqueror than advantageous for the conquered. I had no more to say, but I stood still, ready to reap the rich reward of my success; and for some minutes Mr Chaser kept still likewise. "Intense and profitable moments for us both," thought I. Mr Chaser at length breathed softly. I waited for his words—none came, but he breathed again. "What," said I, secretly, "are the pains and tortures of the body, compared with the throes and agonies of a stricken conscience! What may be his sufferings now!" Still he drew his breath, and still he sat motionless. I approached him, and held out my hand. He did not take it. I was deeply moved; I walked across the kitchen and placed myself before him. I had scarcely done it when I was startled, terrified, by———a snore! Mr Chaser was indeed fast asleep—and had been so, there was no doubt of it, ever since he had

arranged himself in his chair, and had turned his back upon me and my resistless eloquence.

The shadow of my form crossing the closed eyes of the sleeper—awoke him. He muttered some words with a confused apprehension of the passing scene. Then he looked about him, surveyed the kitchen generally but obscurely with half-opened eyes, and called upon me "just to repeat that there last word again."

"Which word?" I asked, sick—most sick at heart.

"About your mo—ther—go to bed—wish good-by—nursery-maid—crad—le," and the eyes were covered gently over by the lid, and he bobbed his head, and was fast asleep again.

With a fiercer desire to suffocate the snoring brass-founder than had possessed Hamlet when his hands itched to shorten the prayers of his over-pious uncle, I dragged myself away from the temptation. Leaving immediately the hall of feasting, I directed my steps towards the manufactory. Here were life and animation truly. Workshop after workshop I passed through, meeting a hundred creatures in my progress too busy with their hands to grant their eyes one passing glance at the intruder. In every room there was a Chaser, securing the respect and homage due to the unconscious spirit reposing in the kitchen, and which otherwise might have been suspended—so inconstant and disloyal are the masses! Few words were thrown away, and fewer moments lost. Each workman felt the uncomfortable

influence of the evil eye that fell upon him—that fixed him to his work, and kept him hammering in spite of all his struggles for rest and breathing-time. The youthful Chasers were present in a twofold character. *Ostensibly* they presided over the different departments of the factory, to labour with the men as labourers. *Really* they were so many spies, noting the various proceedings, compelling silence, enforcing constancy, marking down defalcations. How accurately they performed this division of their task, the workmen themselves acknowledged with wonder and dismay as Saturday night arrived, and with it the acceptable settling time. If, during the short interval of social relaxation, my young friends had found nothing to say to me, I could hardly expect them to be very communicative during the severer hours of business. They permitted me to pursue my road without the smallest greeting or acknowledgment of my presence. One room contained a regiment of young girls who were engaged in the higher branches of the service. Their office it was to finish and furnish the last touches to the work, which had become brighter and cleaner as it had gradually descended from the rough hands of dirty Master William. Over this youthful *corps* Mrs Chaser herself sat in authority. An awful silence prevailed. The little burnishers and lacquerers held their breath, and the mistress had enough to do to watch that none escaped them. As I proceeded, the lady bowed her head with much solemnity. Another

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room completed the survey. It was the counting-house—a small square chamber, filled with drawings and designs carved in wax or cast in plaster. Here was a desk and one high stool. Here sat smoking a pipe, in humble imitation of his parent, the facetious Tom. A jug of small-beer was before him; the ashes of his tobacco were strewed upon the open books. He was the only lazy man in the establishment—true, he was the only genius. A smile was on the countenance of Master Tom. This was no compliment to me; his face was never serious. The counting-house conducted to the street. I snuffed the fresh invigorating air blowing through the open door. How glad was I to feel again the generous element about me! I was *not* so thoroughly deserted as I deemed. I had my health, my liberty, and oh, above all, I was sensible and alive to the beneficent operations of a bounteous and all-healing nature. I heard the buzz of human voices. Hope whispered delusively in my ears, and promised more than I could ask. I listened eagerly to her promptings, and rose superior to my fate, and to the scorn these men had thrown upon me. I departed. "Good-night!" exclaimed the clerk, deridingly. I turned upon him, but he met my enquiring gaze with a grimace that set me laughing, and I could not be angry. I encountered Mr Chaser as I passed up the alley. He beckoned me into his house, but it was only to dismiss me from it more formally and decidedly. He did not hesitate or blush to acquaint me

that he had considered the matter over very seriously, and had come to the conclusion that he could not help me—that was one word for all. As for being security or recommending me, why he knew nothing of me, except that I had been to college, and broke my mother's heart, which were two things against me, and therefore he couldn't be responsible, and so *that* point was settled. If my father had sent me to him when I was young; and if many other circumstances, too tedious here to mention, had taken place, why then something very satisfactory would have been the consequence, and he would have performed wonders in my behalf; but as he had not sent me when I was young, and as the particular circumstances, had *not* come to pass, why of course it was impossible to relieve my urgent wants—to put a crust of bread into my starving throat. This was all very natural, reasonable, and easy to be understood. "Take my advice," said Mr Chaser, kindly and in conclusion, proffering his counsel, "go back to London. You are sure to get into something *there*; but here there's a dreadful feeling against you college chaps. We don't want gentlemen in Birmingham. We can't afford 'em. Go back again, and get your living where you are known. If you stop here any time, missus told me just to say, that she hoped you wouldn't come hanging about the factory. Laziness is horrid catching, and you'd only be ruining the boys, and do yourself no good, for we

shouldn't give you the least encouragement. Do you understand?"

"Oh, perfectly!"

"Well, then, I've nothing more to say, except"——

"Now, father, don't be all day," exclaimed a voice from a workshop window, distinguishable as Master William's.

"Coming, lad, coming! There, go about your business," he added, with impatience. "You are upsetting the whole house. Get on, get on!" and so saying, he moved towards the door, urging me at the same time most unceremoniously before him; in short, and without concealing the fact—kicking me clean out. I walked very hastily indeed from the house, and quicker still, if possible, out of the street itself. Then I stopped to breathe, and collect into a steady focus the flurried powers of my mind. The flattering and soothing, although obscure suggestions of hope, that had erewhile kindled in my bosom the dull and dying embers of a confidence almost extinguished by disappointment and despondency, still protected and sustained me, albeit not with all their earliest vigour. It was pleasing, it was delightful, it was ennobling, to experience the healing assurances of success pouring upon the troubled spirit; but more delightful, more convincing, more conducive to my happiness would it have been, had the invisible and mysterious agents who visited the lonely chamber of my heart, pointed

out distinctly the particular path which I had missed —the path that led to honour and to fortune. Deeper would have been my gratitude had they but hinted the name and dwelling-place of one feeling individual ready to employ me, and to rescue me from a threatening famine. The fault lies not with thee, thou goddess Hope! Glorious in the *abstract* are thy splendid visitations! It is our misfortune and our loss that we cannot feed and thrive upon abstractions!

There was but one house in the town of Birmingham besides Mr Chaser's (which I had firmly resolved never to behold again) that I was entitled to approach in the quality of an acquaintance. This was the public-house at which I had put up; and without any desire on my own part to visit that house of entertainment, I found myself, after many hours' wandering, standing before it, and ready to claim the privilege which I may be said to have purchased with my sixpence on the previous night, *videlicet*, that of seeking a temporary rest upon the bench fixed against its hospitable door. I occupied and amused myself for some time with watching and observing the many thirsty individuals who, one after another, entered the public-house for refreshment, remaining there long enough to be refreshed for herculean labours, if any were to follow. Then I noticed the passengers—scrutinized their looks —formed a judgment of their characters. Now a surly and morose fellow passed, well-dressed, tall and thin—his lips closed, his brows wrinkled and con-

tracted—his hands buried in his pockets. I wondered how many tales of misery it would take to moisten his cold grey eye—how many cities and empires might be desolated and dissolved before the quiet and steady pulsations of his heart would be accelerated by a beat. Next my eye was caught by a stout, fresh-coloured gentleman, walking somewhat slowly under the shelter of a broad-brimmed hat. He was indubitably sweet-tempered and communicative. He had just issued, or I greatly erred, from a pleasant meeting of choice friends, and some smart sally had fallen from his lips, at which the jocund company were roaring still. With what a pardonable vanity he twists his lips about and laughs, and to himself reacts, and now once more, the rich conceit, unmindful of the world, and careless of the universal criticism, which, as he passes, judges him deranged. "Now, here's a man," thought I, "to lend or give me half-a-crown without a murmur, had I the soul to ask it." The opportunity was my own. Twilight had arrived; the air was cold and nipping. I shuddered at my destitution; and I rose and followed him. I touched him gently, and he stopped. My poor heart failed me speedily, and stammering an excuse, I blushed, and trembled like a maiden criminal, and begged him to inform me "What it was o'clock?" Most kindly he replied, and instantly I felt how much more kindly still he would have spoken if I had told him my distress, and besought him to relieve it; and feeling this, I was annoyed, enraged, half-

maddened at my folly and my pride. Returning to my seat, I found myself in company with Thomas, ostler. That well-informed member of society having left his cattle to the sweet digestion of their evening repast, had found his way into the open air, and taken up his position on the bench. With pewter in his hand he looked into the world, and with copious draughts from it he seemed to reconcile his nature to the unequal but existing state of things. I did not suffer my pride to stand in the way of my advancement here. Thomas and I already understood each other. As early as daybreak I had recommended myself to his notice, and for one long hour he had relieved the process of *whish—whishing* at the horses, in imparting to my ear the most important communications. Thomas had been a month in Birmingham, was most dissatisfied with his place, disgusted with the natives, and he intended to elope the instant he could find a gentleman anxious to seduce him to a better situation. He had always been a coachman in a *family*, and "it *druv* him wild to hear the language in the yard, and see the goings on, which he was quite impartial to." In return for all this frank unbosoming, I explained to Thomas the object and expectations of my visit to the town. Now, on my return, and sitting on the bench, I told him of my failure and condition, and asked him, as a man familiar with the world, and as a friend, what he would advise me to do or think of next.

Thomas pondered for a while before he answered, nor did he speak at length until I had taken a handsome share of the remaining porter as a warranty of my good faith and fellowship.

"Betwixt ourselves," said he, "there's no good to be done in this here place. The people are a puzzle, and neither you nor I, nor any body else, can make 'em out. I don't know if it's the smoke as does it, but it's a fact you can't see through e'er a man of 'em—they are in disguise. I have found 'em all as buttery as you like whilst you are talking to 'em, but out of your sight, they haven't a civil word to say for you!"

"Ah, Thomas, what you say of these people is, perhaps, true in a measure of the whole world!"

"Yes, but what I say is, there's no measure at all about these Birmingham chaps. There's no trusting them. I don't think they are Englishmen—that's my opinion. They are for ever going a sneakish, roundabout way, instead of marching at once to the point. I haven't studied human nature for nothing. They remind me of an old master of mine who had a superannuated passage dug out of the ground, and there he was groping his way through it morning and night, instead of walking in at the street door, which was wide open, and right afore him.

"Well," said I, sighing, "there was little flattery or dissimulation on the part of the Chasers."

"Why, perhaps, you were a very particular friend, and they had nothing to get out of you. From what

I've seen, they'll lick you down till they get all the juice out, and then they'll chuck you about like a bad halfpenny. But, I say, where did you think of sleeping to-night?"

"Heaven knows! I have told you that I am penniless. I suppose that I must beg my weary way back to London, and begin the journey to-morrow. I shall find a heap of straw somewhere to-night: I am determined not to break my heart for a little trouble."

"You call it a little, do you? Well, I am glad of that. But you sha'n't sleep on straw, any how. Just come up into the loft. My bed's big enough for two, and if you like the half of it, you are welcome to make yourself at home. Something, I daresay, will turn up for you in a day or two."

We proceeded to the stable-yard, ascended the ladder in the stable, and entered the sleeping apartment of the benevolent ostler. There was a moveable stove in the room, a small fire was burning in it, and a genial heat prevailed. Oh, it was very grateful to my desolate heart! Thomas had the tact of rendering himself comfortable under unfavourable circumstances. His room was very small, but it was very neat and clean. The roof was sloping—the ceiling inconveniently low—but the floor was white from recent scouring. One window supplied the loft with light. It consisted of a few small diamond panes of glass, but rubbed and polished with such success, that what they lost in number they gained again in power. A

press bedstead was on one side of the room, putting forth an allowable claim during the daytime to be recognized as a wardrobe, and opposite to it was a cupboard containing the whole stock of plate, crockery, and hardware, that served Thomas at his meals. I was very happy, and sat down before the stove, chafing my fingers.

"Ah, a bit of fire's nice—isn't it? Were you ever abroad, where they only smell the fire and never see it? I left the first and best place I ever had on that account. My father was a man-cook; and when I was boy, I used to stand with my back to the kitchen fire for hours together, holding up my coat and warming myself through and through. When I was taken abroad to *Pa-ree*, in France, I looked for the fire so naturally, and got so disappointed and miserable, that I gave my governor the discharge before I had been with him a month. What's the use of being warmed by a fire if you can't see it. I say, should you like a cup of tea? I was going to turn in when you came up. Make yourself at home."

Thomas displayed the contents of his cupboard, put a small kettle of water on the fire, and prepared for tea. I apologized for my intrusion, and I felt ashamed when I deprived the generous fellow of his hard-earned provisions—so I told him.

"Now, I say," said Thomas, "none of that. Wouldn't you do the same for me?"

"Thomas, I cannot tell. I hope I should."

"Very well; then there's no obligation on either side. There seems to be a great deal of talk just now about the hairystocracy, and the privileged classes; but let me tell you, old fellow, if a man can help another in distress, and has got the heart to do it, mind you, it is my opinion that he needn't envy all the privileged classes together, with the king at the head of them."

"Do you ever read books, Thomas?"

"No; but I'm very partial to the the-atre. That's the school for human nature, depend upon it. Were you ever at Common Garden?"

"I never was at a playhouse in my life."

"Lor'!" cried Thomas, turning up his eyes and hands, and suffering the latter to fall again upon the table, as though his surprise had taken away all his power, and he couldn't prevent them, "Lor'!—what you have lost! What, never seen a tragedy?"

"I have read one often."

"Yes, that's like the *Pa-ree* fire. If you haven't seen it, you know nothing. The dresses and the scenery, and the actor's faces and action are every thing. I wish you had only seen a few of the combats that I have. No man knows any thing of the horrors of war if he reads the newspapers for ever, unless he has seen a few desperate combats on the stage. They have got a very fair playhouse here. How should you like to go to-night?"

"With what spirits, Thomas, do you think I could participate in amusement of any kind?"

"That's very true. I know some men who always get drunk when they are low-spirited; but it doesn't answer. Still, I think there's something very consoling in a tragedy. You do see great people so tremendously wretched, that your own troubles look as light as a feather after it. I say, just shut that door behind you. I'll be bound there's some fellow listening in the stables. It's impossible to be sharp enough for Brummagem."

I complied with Thomas's request, and then he unbuttoned his pocket, and produced an old leathern pocket-book. From many papers he selected one narrow slip.

"There!" he exclaimed, putting it before me. "Do you know what that is?"

"Not exactly, Thomas."

"No, I dare say not," he added, with a triumphant smile. "It's by a great favour, I can tell you, that I have got hold of that. Look at it—it's an order for the pit."

"And what of it?"

"Why, read. 'Theatre-Royal. Admit two. Not admitted after seven.' You see they are very particular." Thomas proceeded in a lower tone. "The ostler that had my place before I came here, comes out to-night, and I'm agoing to support him. I can't get away till late; but if you'll take the order and leave one in my name, I'll be after you as soon as I have put up the horses, and made things right below."

I explained to Thomas that I had no desire to leave

his hospitable loft, but I was ready to do any thing with respect to the playhouse that he might consider most advantageous to the interests of himself and his predecessor.

"Well, that's very kind of you," replied Thomas. "The fact is, if somebody doesn't go to give Thatcher a hand, I'm afraid he'll do no good. He's stark mad for the stage, and yet I don't think he'll ever get to first-rate parts. The stuff's not in him. But he thinks differently, of course. He's got a very queer part to-night. There's only one line for him to say, though he's on in nearly every scene. Now, what I want you to do is this—When he first appears, just make some remark about his fine figure to the man who sits on one side of you, and when he walks across the stage, ask the man on the other side if he ever saw such command and action, and if he is not of opinion that he'll turn out a Kemble. I'm sure Thatcher will sink without a little encouragement. If you stir these two men up, and excite them a little by talking about poor Thatcher whenever he walks on, they'll be quite prepared to clap him as soon as he speaks; and you must take particular care when he does speak, for he shuts his mouth again directly, and you won't have another chance to kick with your feet and clap your hands all night again. I have got his speech here somewhere." Thomas searched through his papers again, and found one with a few words written on it in pencil. "Pay attention, there's a good fellow!

It's in the fourth scene of the third act. The king asks Thatcher if he knows Am—Am—Am—something—Ambergreses, I think it is—and if he does, what he thinks of him. Then Thatcher says he does, '*and what I know*,' says he, '*is this: that whilst the sun is shining in his face, the east wind's blowing mischief from his heart.*' Now, directly Thatcher has said this, I want you to cry—'*Oh, oh, beautiful!*' and clap, and stamp, and holla '*bravo, bravo*,' and nudge the two men—all at once. You must not lose a minute, and you may holla out in your excitement any thing you like except *angcore*, because that's quite nonsensical in a speech, and was only meant for songs and dances. Now, I say, can you do this for a fellow with a family?"

"Thomas, you have been very kind to me, and I would willingly do any thing to serve you. But do you think me equal to this task? Recollect I know nothing of the theatre's proceedings."

"All the better and more natural. If you go a little beyond the mark, they'll think you are carried away by your feelings. We have got an hour to spare, and we'll talk it over."

Our tea was finished. Thomas returned to his duties. I set out to perform mine. I proceeded to the theatre and took a seat, as I had been instructed, near two gentlemen who appeared by their demeanour not to be regular visitors. We entered into conversation, and before the rising of the curtain we were as

intimate as it was possible for us to become in the short space of twenty minutes, and without an introduction. The theatre became very crowded. A great performer from London was about to appear after an absence of many years—and the audience was full of expectation. I was prepared to execute my commission in every particular. The simplicity and frankness of Thomas, his unhesitating cordial reception of me—beggar and unknown as I was—his warm and catholic spirit, had touched me deeply. His low employment could not sully, his rough exterior could not obscure, the pure humanity that adorned his humble nature—could not control the streaming tenderness which God is pleased, with irrespective love, to draw from founts imbedded in the coarsest earth. I compared his friendly conduct with the heartlessness and barbarity of the Chasers, from which, be it remembered, I was yet fresh and still smarting —and I felt proud to be engaged in the poor man's service. I remembered, too, through whose instrumentality it was that I was now here, who it was that had come to my rescue in the first bitter hour of want and helplessness—the gentle-hearted and hard-labouring Thomson. I sat in the pit of the theatre summing up all that the poor had done for *me*, and reckoned my present attendance a very small instalment indeed in discharge of the debt I had contracted. When the curtain drew up at length, and the charm and novelty of the scene gave new fire and vigour to my feelings,

I became roused and animated to an uncontrollable degree, and then it was that, forgetting every thing—even the grand representation itself—in the fulfilment of the office which I had undertaken, I took leave of my judgment, and gave vent to the most extravagant and chivalric ebullitions of emotion. My neighbours did not at first seem pleased at their proximity to so restless an auditor as I proved to be. Be sure, I was ever on the alert; and, regardful of Thomas's precepts, profoundly mindful of the exits and the entrances of Mr Thatcher. Little repose did I allow my new acquaintances, for very jealous was I of the glances and encomiums they bestowed on every one but him who needed them the most. "Look at his gait and figure, sir," said I, beseechingly, as Thatcher walked along—most awkward and ungracefully, it cannot be denied. "Look, sir," I repeated, pulling at the sleeve of one." "Don't!" replied my victim, harassed and annoyed in the extreme; "do let me hear the play," he added, reduced almost to tears. What is refused to perseverance? Fortunately for me, my play-goers were modest and retired. They might, with great propriety, have recommended me to the notice of the constable; but they shunned publicity, and preferred submission to the torture. Perhaps they did at last perceive a latent beauty in the martial bearing of the well-dressed Thatcher—perhaps it caught and struck them unawares. Suddenly, and at my instigation, they hailed his entrance with a burst of acclamation—

a huge *bravo*—and then the audience, with one accord, burst into laughter. We repeated the experiment, but not with like success. Some cried for our expulsion—others, *shame!*—some gave dark hints about the watchman and the watch-house; and not a few were for corporal punishment, and on the spot. My colleagues were silenced instantly—not so Thomas's faithful and infatuated confidant. In quiet reserve I held myself for the approaching speech. It came. Poor Thatcher had but one friend in the house, but he made noise enough for fifty. There was a general commotion—loud signs of indignation—a dozen violent hands laid hold of me. "Away with him—send him to the devil!" exclaimed one indignant party. "Make him remember it!" said another. "Give the dog a bone!" interposed a third. I was held up in the air—the people made way that those who bore me might pass along freely; and in a few minutes I found myself in the street, half stupid from excitement, and from the cuffs and blows that had been gallantly dealt upon me in my progress.

"That's pretty treatment, isn't it?" enquired a youthful voice, recalling me to consciousness. It was Ebenezer, the apprentice. "That's the way they've treated me," continued he, "since I was five years old. Now, I don't look for any other."

"Did you see them then?" I asked.

"Yes, I sat behind you in the pit; and, when they dragged you out, I followed. You have had your

share to-day. I say, is that true what you said to my master?"

"What?"

"Oh, I heard you, every word! I was in the yard, emptying the *aqua-fortis*, all the time. If all's true that you told him, he ought to be ashamed of himself for turning you out; but he's got no feelings. None of 'em have. It will be different this day two years."

"I suppose you will then be a free man."

"No—not that exactly—though we shall all be free too. Ah! I know something."

"Well, good-night, Ebenezer," said I.

"I say, stay a minute—do. Didn't I hear you say that you had broken your mother's heart?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, didn't I?—tell me," said Ebenezer, quickly.

"Something like it, perhaps," I replied, "if you listened as closely as you confess to have done."

"I didn't listen," replied the boy. "The door was wide open, and any body might have heard you in the next street. You run away from your mother then?"

"No, I didn't."

"Well, but I run away—and, when mother died, they told me I broke her heart, and that running away had done it. Look here," he continued, taking an old, discoloured letter from his pocket with a trembling hand. "Oh, I forgot!" he said, putting it back again,

" it's dark now—you can't see to read it. But that's what they said, and they have made me as miserable as a murderer."

" How old are you, Ebenezer?"

" I was fifteen last birthday. I run away two years ago. Wouldn't you have done it? Mother was a widow, and had five girls beside me. She couldn't earn enough to keep them, and I could get nothing to do. Now, I say, do tell me, was there any harm in my going off without a word, and leaving my share of the victuals to be divided amongst my sisters?"

" I don't think there was."

" Well, I think not, too," added Ebenezer, his young and sorrowful countenance assuming a sadder cast.

At this moment a party of low roisterly men approached us, singing, and exclaiming at the top of their voices. I retired under the lighted portico of the theatre, and drew Ebenezer after me. The face of the boy was a striking one. His features did not possess either beauty or perfection of form, but from their combination, there sprang a sweet and plaintive expression, that could not fail to touch your heart and win it. His complexion was dark, and of a temperament known by the term *susceptible*, marking, as it does, how alive and quick the hidden spirit is to affections from all external things. His hair was black, and twisted by nature into close round curls,

wiry and strong, like the negro's. He had a small dark brown eye, and above it a pencilled brow, ingenuous and truthful. The eye was soft and melting when it spoke, and speak it did most movingly, oftener and more convincingly than the lips, which carried on their impending edges a weight of early woe.

"Why did you follow me from the theatre, Ebenezer?" I asked, when we were under cover of the portico.

"I don't know exactly," he replied. "Only I wanted you to tell me of your mother, and because I knew you were unhappy, like me. I didn't like the way they treated you to-day. I don't wonder at their ill-using me; that's to be expected—but you are their relation, ain't you?"

"Well, Ebenezer—we have nothing to do but to submit to our lot, and to bear our troubles patiently."

"Oh no! we needn't though," answered the boy with great vivacity, his liquid eye full of emotion; "no, we needn't. I know better."

"If we do not, we shall only make our condition worse."

"No, we sha'n't do that either," he continued. "I say, did you ever hear of the New Moral World? I am a member of that."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and in two years you'll find things very different.—I can't tell you how it all is; Mr Rational can; but I know this—we shall all be very comfortably

off in the New World—the poor are to be rich, and the rich are to behave themselves. We are to be united, and love one another, and the subscription's only sixpence a-week."

"I never heard of this."

"Oh, it's quite true, you may depend upon it. Have you ever heard of Juggernot?"

"I have read about it."

"Well, that's where Mr Chaser will go, and all the hard-working masters. Mr Rational says there's no hard work at all in the new world—that one day in the week is enough for a man's support, and we are only to work for ourselves. I am to be a nature's noble."

"A what!"

"A nature's noble. A nobleman, you know—a great man with plenty of money and carriages. My instincts are to be allowed to show themselves."

"I never heard of this before, Ebenezer."

"I daresay not," replied the boy. "Mr Rational says, that in the old world it's all force and fraud, and the light of truth is put out with a priestly extinguisher. I wish you would become a member. You would find out directly what your nature is, and then all your troubles would be put an end to."

Poor Ebenezer spoke with much earnestness on this curious topic. The subject was, in truth, novel to his listener, nor did he seem himself to comprehend it in all its bearings, and with that conviction

and power which were necessary to render it perfectly intelligible. The lad was unfortunate in life. He had no goodly heritage—the lines had not fallen unto him in pleasant places; a dim shadow of future good had been placed before his sanguine and excitable spirit—a prospect of happiness such as he had never dreamt of—and without waiting to enquire into the reality and truth of its pretensions, he enjoyed the promise at once, and with a delight and assurance that could not have been increased by the surest possession. Such, before I parted with him for the evening, I gathered to be the condition of the susceptible boy. Language similar to the above he continued to reiterate. He spoke of the great cause of the suffering poor until his eyes filled with water; and of his revered master, Mr Rational, he made mention in terms of praise that had no limit. The gods and demigods of old, and the saints of a later date, were mean company for the benevolent patriarch of the New Moral World. He was quite sure that I should be well off and comfortable in the new state of things, and that I could do nothing better than become a disciple. "He was a disciple," he said, "and if I would meet him to-morrow night after he was done work, he would show me his ticket of admission and his medal." There was a mixture of vehemence and artlessness in the manner of poor Ebenezer that was not to be resisted; but, independently of these, it was not difficult to create in my depressed bosom an interest in any cause where I

might look to find the seeds of my own future prosperity. I consented to meet Ebenezer on the following evening at an earlier hour, and on the same spot. He would then conduct me to the abode of Mr Rational, and from that gentleman himself I should learn the exact amount of relief that was about to be showered upon the believers in the new creed, the members of "*the New Moral World.*" I accompanied the lad to the street in which he lived, and then returned immediately to my own temporary home. Thomas was sitting over his fire, and smoking his pipe—he looked disconcerted and unhappy. The arrival of travellers had frustrated his benevolent intention, and he had not been able to reach the theatre. "It's always the way," said Thomas, expressing himself tritely but profoundly, as most persons do similarly situated; "if I hadn't wanted to go out, here I might have sat for ever before a job had walked into the yard—but because I did, there's just been one continued shower. Well, what luck for poor Thatcher?"

I narrated at full length my experience at the theatre.

Thomas shook his head slowly and despondingly. "Is it possible?" he exclaimed. "They have raised a party against him, as sure as I am a ostler; who'd have suspected it? The public press will give him the last kick to-morrow morning, and Thatcher will be a soger and a supernumery from this night forrards. There's genius crushed!" Thomas became low-spi-

rited, and although we sat together for an hour or two after my return, there was no moving him to any thing like cheerfulness and social enjoyment. Thatcher's failure, which he looked upon as consummated in my expulsion, fastened upon him, to use his own expressive words, "like Old Bailey pinions, and he was quite at a stand-still."

Very civil was Mr Thomas, but very sorrowful.

I once overheard two beggars discussing their separate states—comparing the results of all their wanderings. A few passages in their conversation were worthy of remark; they indicated the meditative and brooding spirit of man, neither crippled nor frozen beneath the cold rags of lean mendicity. The mendicants had withdrawn themselves from the public street, and were planted against a dusky brick wall that enclosed the garden of a great nobleman—one of the green spots of London, upon which the city-pent boy was wont to stare wonderingly, dreaming the while of paradise; one almsman was old, and leaned upon a staff—his companion was middle-aged—both were sickly-looking.

"I don't agree with you, Roger," said the younger beggar; "it's with the first blush of morning that hope revives and life looks promising again. When I wake up, I feel confident and fresh, and something supports me inwardly that's as stout as this good wall. I have no doubts or fears, but I feel as certain of luck as though I was rolling about in yonder carriage. It

takes some hours to disappoint me and make me desperate; and when disappointment and desperation do come, it's not all at once, but gradually and gradually, like the twilight and the night, as I have seen them on a large common, creeping and crawling along, taking the place of sunshine. I don't give way till night and darkness come, and then it's true I am very wretched indeed. But sleep cures me again, and I rise next morning as strong as ever, and as ready to trust fortune as though the jade had not jilted me since the day I first trusted her, may years ago."

"You are a sanguine man, Jacob," answered the elder one, "and you have not lived long enough to get your blood quieted and calmed; depend upon it, what I said is true. For us beggars there is no happiness in the broad day; cuffs and cruel words, and the prospect of the cage. It's miserable work! When I was as young as you are, it was just when night came on that my spirits revived; and I took courage, and hoped and believed in the kindness of the day that was yet unborn; but the sun rose, and I drooped again; for the day looked like all the rest, and it proved just as cruel and deceitful. Now my heart is moved neither night nor day; and I have lost all the enjoyment that I used to feel, expecting and hoping from one hour to another. There's but one time when I feel myself excited as I used to be when I was confident and young, and very strange excitement it is too. I mean, Jacob, when I am asleep and dreaming. It

is a gay time that for beggars, and the only time in this world when they get the advantage. I have often dreamt that I was a king, when I dare say the king himself was dreaming that he was a beggar; and who was the happiest man then, I should like to know! Give me twelve hours' sleep, and golden dreams all the while; I care for nothing else."

I have never forgotten the reasoning of my philosophic mendicants. Strikingly it presented itself to my memory when I rose from Thomas's poor but hospitable bed, elastic and full of belief. How exactly did my own impulses coincide with those of Jacob! How, in spite of the unrelenting reality of my situation—in the very teeth of disappointment and abandonment—my easily moved heart rose and expanded at the sight of the bare floor, dappled here and there with dancing sunlight! If, on the preceding evening, in place of an aching brain, tossed with fierce alarms, I had deposited on my pillow a mind peace-sustained and tranquillized by firm assurances, there would have been a ground now for hilarity—a motive and a reason for the confidence that inspired me with gladness, and urged me to activity. Thomas bustled about his work—every hand in the house was busy—every creature in the street was moving. Sunshine was with them all—lighting up their paths, illuminating their contented cheeks—blessing and adorning industry with grace and beauty borrowed from the skies. How petty looked my troubles in the midst of

all! How evident it seemed, during the brief period of a dazzled fancy, that they were soon to end; and that the object of my life was now to be obtained, if I would only walk abroad and seek it diligently. Walk abroad I did. Every street and alley of the town I searched and scoured for employment. The brisk morning inspired me with confidence, and with a boldness at which I have since marvelled. I visited the inhabitants—first imploring, and at length demanding, some post of business, however poor, however humble. "Heaven!" I exclaimed, as I found myself wandering from house to house, heaping defeat upon defeat, mortification upon mortification, "this is incredible! Surely there must be many, like myself, seeking, as I am now, the means of life, and they must obtain it too, or starve and die—as I shall soon. What an amount of misery is there then of which the world knows nothing, and for which it cares as little! But no, it cannot be; there is, there must be, some broad avenue to success, and I have missed and lost it." I continued steadily my ineffectual pursuit. Failure accompanied me throughout. Winter was in my heart again. Hope, bird of passage as she is, flew from the bleak spot, and sought a warmer home. She left me depressed and beaten down in spirit, and then I knew how I had warmed and nestled in my bosom a fluttering and inconstant charmer. I returned to the public house. Already was my foot upon the ladder which conducted to the loft, when a

sickening sense of shame prevented my further progress. How could I ask—accept a pittance from the kind stranger! Could I, without a blush—could I again partake of the food which his hard labour scarcely enabled him to provide for his own support? No, I could not, would not do it, and I retreated instantly. I passed into the next street lest Thomas might be about, and, seeing me, suspect that I was lingering near the house in expectation of a further invitation from him. It was a quiet street, and afforded me an opportunity for meditation. Little speculation needs the outcast and the beggar. I resolved to pass the coming night under the broad sky, because I had not where to lay my head. I had never before spent a night in the open streets. It was a novel and a curious procedure, and might afford me instruction and amusement. God help me! To what shifts must griping necessity reduce that poor soul that soothes itself with such expedients for knowledge and entertainment! At the corner of the street through which I walked, almost the only passenger, there stood the shop of a pawnbroker. I had passed it very often. I had looked into its window time after time, remaining there for many minutes together, for want of better occupation; but the place and its transactions had suggested nothing to my strained and wearied mind. Approaching the shop for the twentieth time, I remarked a young woman crossing the road and hastening towards it. She was

neatly dressed in a faded but still clean silk gown, and a small befitting bonnet, which was drawn closely to her face. She tripped along with short and rapid steps, looking neither to the right nor left, and, arriving at the shop, hurried anxiously into it. My curiosity was raised, and I watched her from the window. A bundle was in her hand; tremulously she untied it, and drew from it a coat, black and little worn. Her lips and every feature moved as she addressed a young man who fixed his eyes keenly upon her, taking at the same moment the coat from her hand, and holding it up at its full length. Then the man smiled and shook his head. Her own fell, and she drew a handkerchief from her pocket that I thought was bedrenched with tears—but this was my own fancy. My warm breath had moistened and darkened the window—I removed the vapour, the handkerchief had not been unfolded, it was very white, and, as yet, tearless. Then the shopkeeper placed the coat before her, closed his arms, and looked still more rudely into her downcast face. He spoke a few words which, of of course, I could not hear; but which his emphatic gestures, like a good dictionary, enabled me to translate. There was no doubt of his meaning. He had refused to advance another shilling on the pledge. The young woman made a brief answer—a few shillings were extracted from a drawer and spread upon the counter. The pawner could scarcely take them up for agitation, but having secured them with her

shaking fingers, she tottered from the shop more confused than when she came to it. She passed me quickly, enabling me to catch a glance of a most fair and melancholy visage. She turned the corner of the street—I followed and observed her. She rested against a post—again the same white handkerchief was in request—I could not be mistaken now—she filled it with her tears. I followed still the young and gentle sufferer; with rigorous care she dried her eyes and wiped her cheek, and then moved quickly into a second street. "Sad, sad," thought I, "must be her history!" Arriving at a baker's shop, she stopped, looked for a moment in, then entered. There sat, awaiting her appearance, an emaciated figure—a tall and sickly-looking man, as old perhaps as she, and once, no doubt, as fair. He placed a penny on the counter—bowed to the mistress of the shop, and took the sorrowing woman's proffered arm; he breathing hard and painfully, and coughing with every little effort—she, for the sake of her dear charge, burying her tears beneath her smiles, and turning these encouragingly upon him, arm in arm they issued slowly from the shop. It was a task for one at least, to find the street's extremity. I waited till they reached it, then losing sight of them, I returned without delay to the public house. The ostler was busy in the yard. Instructed by what I had witnessed, I mounted the ladder unperceived by any one, and took a garment from the box of clothes which I had carried to the loft

on the preceding night. I ran to the pawnbroker's, and pledged it for a crown. To appease my hunger I purchased bread, which I devoured in the street; then I bought some meat, which, with returning confidence and cheerfulness of heart, I speedily conveyed to Thomas. He expressed his displeasure when I exhibited my offering, but I saw that he was pleased that I presented it. The motive of the gift gratified the man, who loved to look upon the better side of human nature. He pressingly renewed his invitation; I was freed from the grating shackles of obligation, and I did not hesitate to accept it. The satisfaction which I received from the fresh and unlooked-for possession of comfort—from the certainty of another night's rest, produced a happy reaction—a powerful and sudden transformation of feeling, at once agreeable and cheering. Thomas made tea. He had shortly before paid a visit of condolence to the unfortunate Mr Thatcher. Once and again he mourned over the fate of that gentleman, and furthermore expressed his decided conviction, that his histrionic friend only waited for a convenient opportunity to remove himself from this great scene of trouble, "where," continued Thomas, "as the play has it, '*all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely passengers.*'" He had never seen a man so cut up in all his life before, and he didn't wonder at it; for the eyes of the public were on him, and he must be a terror to himself

wherever he went. I consoled my host, and bade him cherish better thoughts.

"It was very kind of me," he answered, "to talk in that way; but Thatcher's case was one of those wholesale miseries that didn't admit of any hope whatever. Some men were ruined in public, some in private. Now Thatcher was smashed every way."

Thomas continued to talk in this mournful strain until the hour of my appointment with Ebenezer approached, and I rose to depart.

"Don't be late," said Thomas, in a supplicating tone. "This business has made me very nervous. As long as I am doing something I don't care, but sitting alone sets me moping, and going into the tap below is worse than all. Get back as quick as you can—there's a good fellow!"

I pledged my word to return in good time to supper. Thomas followed me to the gate, and there, putting his hands morosely into his pockets, solemnly declared that it was a perfect madness for him to think of going up stairs again, and so he shouldn't attempt it, but he'd just keep company with the horses till I came home. Thus speaking, he opened the stable-door and walked into it, a lump of spiritless matter.

I arrived at the portico of the theatre before the appointed hour, but Ebenezer was already waiting for me. He was now cleaner and better dressed than I had found him at our previous meeting. His face had been recently washed, and much rubbing had brought

upon it a glossy brightness. It was highly coloured too, partly by nature, but chiefly by excitement. His soft dark eye glanced with delight when I approached him, and his young lips quivered with an over-eagerness to welcome me. I looked upon him with admiration. It was a face that would have graced a prince. With my mind's eye, and in my age, I revert to him with sadness; for I have lived to witness, as a common sight, the cruel fate of genius beating through the straits of poverty—its early power and promise, its rapid wreck and ruin.

"I haven't much time," said the boy, greeting me, "I must be at home again in an hour. I was obliged to tell a falsehood to get out at all."

"Then you did wrong, Ebenezer," I replied, "and you may be sure no good will come of it."

"I couldn't help it," returned the boy, blushing as he spoke. "If I had said that I was coming to you, they would have kept me in the house. They do nothing but make game of you, and call you names."

"Ebenezer," said I, sincerely interested in the welfare of the ardent apprentice, "listen seriously to what I say. A lie is the first temptation that the devil puts before us, when he has resolved upon our destruction. A very pleasing temptation it is to many; but it is fatal to all. It was when I brought myself to write an unwarrantable falsehood to my mother, that greater offences committed against her seemed hardly offences at all. They do say that lying is the criminal's alphabet,

and that nothing is easier than to become a robber or a murderer, after you have once uttered a deliberate lie without a pang or a blush."

"Well, let us go to Mr Rational now," answered Ebenezer, uneasy and restless in his manner. "I am ready," I replied, and we walked together in silence. I thought the youth had grown sullen. We had proceeded some distance, when he stopped and looked up at me. He was crying. "It's all very well what you say," he exclaimed, sobbing, "and I can't help it if you think so bad of me. But what was I to do? I had promised to meet you, and they would have hindered me."

"It would have been wiser to break your word with me, Ebenezer, than your faith with God. Don't cry so, boy. The people are observing us, and they will think that I am ill-treating you. And do not suppose that I am a hypocrite, preaching what I cannot practise, for the sake of being thought better than yourself. I have been wicked, very wicked, and I would have you avoid the rock upon which I have struck. I can have no object in view but your own happiness, in thus speaking to you."

"Well, but you don't think," he continued earnestly, "that because I told master a lie this once, that I shall turn out such a character, do you? I don't feel as if I should, and yet people wouldn't say so if it wasn't true."

"Be careful for the future, Ebenezer," I replied,

"and watch yourself narrowly. If we are satisfied that we have done wrong, and are sorry for it, our very faults often prove our best counsellors and friends."

I hardly knew what to say to mitigate the pain which my reproof had inflicted. The heart of the apprentice was as sensitive as a girl's. A touch would set it gushing.

We reached at length the abode of Mr Rational. The great and good man dwelt as far as possible from the denizens of the old immoral world. He occupied the attic of a very high house, situated in a street of very humble pretensions. Ebenezer waited an instant at the street door to arrange his Sunday's dress, which had become disordered in our progress, wiped his face briskly with a blue cotton handkerchief, asked me if he looked as if he had been crying, and, upon receiving my assurance that the smallest vestige of a tear had not been left behind, he mounted the scraper at the door, and pulled at a lofty bell with all his might and main. A friendly understanding amongst the numerous lodgers in this establishment, rendered it incumbent upon Ebenezer to repeat this operation six distinct and several times. With my assistance he was enabled to complete the work, and after some little necessary delay, we obtained admittance. The door was opened by a lad about fifteen years of age; his singular behaviour did not permit me to take any but a very hasty glance at him. He drew the latch of the door violently aside—the door flew wide open—and he

himself flew up stairs like an arrow from a bow. I looked at Ebenezer for an explanation. "It's all right," said he, guessing my meaning. "We must go up stairs—Mr Rational's at his supper, and he's very angry if Jem's out of the way, for he don't like waiting upon himself." "Oh, very well!" was my reply, and then Ebenezer set out on his journey, and I followed him, and after the lapse of a period something short of an hour, and after undergoing a fatigue, which he who ascends Mont Blanc may understand—we reached the distinguished chamber, holding within its walls the future purifier of the world and general regenerator of mankind. There he sat, a rump steak broiled to a charm before him—a savoury morsel on his fork, revelling in gravy—pickled onions at his side—there he sat, a hard and musculous man, fifty years of age at most, six feet three at least. High cheekbones, large eyes, thick nose, broad chest, tremendous mouth, and sandy head of hair—frizzled—all united to impress me with an overpowering awe, and "to give the world assurance of a man." The youth who had answered the six peals of the bell stood behind the giant's chair, a satellite scarce recognizable in the presence of that huge terrestrial body. In the corner of the room I perceived a gold-headed stick—club rather—about a foot higher than the waiting boy, no doubt a flexible twig in the grasp of its massive owner. The gold, or gilt, or brass mounting of the stick, stood in garish contrast with every other article in the room, which

certainly was as scantily supplied with the understood conveniences of life as any receptacle for man could be, short of his last and narrowest. Ebenezer had doffed his hat, and put his hair in order, before he ventured to ascend a stair, so oppressed was he with reverential fear or love. Under the eye of the renovator he literally quailed, and it was with difficulty that he found words to effect my introduction. Brandy and water, strong and hot, did Mr Rational imbibe to his contentment, not to say satiety. One long and crowning draught he swallowed as Ebenezer spoke on my behalf, then placing the glass quite empty on the table, and breathing thickly through his nose, he unclosed his lips again, roaring like Stentor.

"What," he exclaimed in a voice which, but for the brandy and water that had made it hoarse, and reduced its volume, would at once have brought the roof upon us. "What, Ebenezer, another deluded native of the immoral world! Has he come with his heart in his hand, and his hand in his pocket—has he come to draw the milk of knowledge from the moral paps of the harmonious reformer?"

Ebenezer made the great teacher understand that I was a very wretched individual, and that, having been spurned by my relatives, I had come to him for comfort and advice.

"Ah, ha!" cried Mr Rational, in a tone of sarcasm, that trilled most unpleasantly on the tympanum, "the old thing—stopping up the instincts of your nature,

and be d——d to them. Now, I tell you, young man," he continued getting very angry, " if the instincts of your nature compel you to think and feel as you do think and feel—who, I should like to know, has any right to prevent your feeling and thinking as strongly as you please? Every body must have liberty to act in accordance with the dictates of his nature—Some more brandy and water, Jem—then every body shall speak truth without mystery, truth without error, truth without fear. Truth will produce love, and love every thing else that's desirable—and this is the millennium."

Ebenezer followed the speaker with a countenance glowing with admiration and delight. To me, I confess, he was not exactly intelligible. The size of his person, and the vehemence of his manner, inclined me to regard him as somebody; but I could attach no suitable ideas to his mysterious words. Jem soon returned with the brandy and water, placed it before the Regenerator, and retired behind the chair as before. Mr Rational quaffed, smacked his lips, belched impolitely, and proceeded.

" I don't blame you, my boy," he said, shaking his head—" quite the reverse. I pity you, now that you have become unbearable to yourself through your false principles, and your ignorance. You have lived under the old system till you can stand the heart-hardening, the mind-softening process no longer, and you want to repose under—under the—give me the

book, Jem "—Jem produced a dirty dog-eared volume, which Mr Rational opened, and resumed, reading from it as follows—" under the leafy shades of the real tree of knowledge, situated in the garden of Paradise, where man adorns himself with the fig-leaf of intelligence: the tree where wealth grows upon the branches, and war ceases even amongst the caterpillars, and virtue comes from the sap and vital juice; where you see Pandemonium, the old world, in the distance, swallowed up into nothing; and where you shall enjoy yourself for ever, and some time after, in the increasing happiness of your children, if you are fathers of families."

No one attempted to check the flow of eloquence.

" No ! " exclaimed Mr Rational, imbibing a little drop more, and striking the table with his knuckles, " there isn't—it's no good hiding the matter—there isn't no glory, there isn't no power, there isn't no love in that miserable, ignorant, and disunited beast—Man ! Look at France—look at Spain—look at Portugal—look at Italy—look at Poland. Ain't you disgusted yet? Well, then, look at Turkey—look at Russia—look at Persia—look at India—look at China—look at 'em all, one at a time, and then all together. Read what the books say of 'em. Read the papers. Can you bear it? Ain't they all in excitement? Ain't they feeling the necessity of something? What is it they feel? What are they excited about? I can tell you, and I will—but pay your subscription

like a new moral creature—learn wisdom, and walk as a nobleman into the superior state of human existence."

Fielding observes, that there is a class of men whom experience only, and not their own natures, must inform that there are such things as deceit and hypocrisy in the world, and who, consequently, are not at five-and-twenty as difficult to be imposed upon as the oldest and most subtle. It is true that I had not passed the last two years of my life without deriving some knowledge from the sharp practice to which I had been exposed; but the experience which I had collected had rather skimmed and irritated the surface of my system than entered potently and beneficially into its centre. I had endured the whipping of the master: had I not felt the smarts? But mine was not yet the wisdom dearly purchased with the punishment. Mr Rational was, to all intents and purposes, intoxicated; that is to say, if he had not arrived at that extreme point at which drunkenness, placing its wretched victim in horrid stupefaction, leaves him in a plight which the vilest animal that crawls might contemplate with triumph; if he had not reached this honourable climax, he had safely gained that only less pitiable condition in which reason, tumbled from her seat, is content to bow and minister to folly that usurps it. I could not fail to be conscious of his state. For half an hour he continued to preach in the above mazy style, filling up the very small gaps of repose with hot

infuriating liquor; becoming, as it was natural he should become, more violent and more incoherent with every fresh imbibition. I had seen enough to be satisfied, and as the moment for Ebenezer's return homeward drew near, I was glad to remind him of the terms upon which he had received permission to come abroad. It was difficult to conceive how the inspired bacchanal or madman could obtain so firm a fastening upon the mind and feelings of this boy. The more the large man raved, the brighter gleamed his eye, the more absorbed were all his faculties in the consideration of the speaker. Turning towards him for the purpose of hinting that it was time to depart, I beheld his lips moving in a dumb attempt to repeat the incongruous sounds of the untired ranter; and when I touched and pulled him, he was as insensible to my application as a stone might be, or as the gold-headed stick was, quietly reposing in the corner. Finding no means of moving the rapt boy, I resolved at least to take my own departure, and walking towards the door with that object, I called loudly to Ebenezer, informing him of my intention.

"Not yet;" roared out Mr Rational, "listen to the demonstratable truth. Why will you be a bigot? Come here—come here!" he continued, coaxing me towards him; "must you go? must you go?" said he more tenderly, and grasping my hand. "Do wait a little—only a little, till I've spoken about marriage and divorce—durable affections—pleasure and

enjoyment—love and separation—marry who you like —three months' notice turn her off—marry somebody else—permanent happy union. Oh, listen to this!"—Ebenezer's attention had been loosed by the regenerator's diversion from the main oration. I took the opportunity to remonstrate with him, and to inform Mr Rational seriously, that neither of us could, with propriety, remain any longer—"Come to-morrow, then!" exclaimed the gentleman, pinching my wrist with a force that made refusal dangerous. "Come to-morrow morning and hear the rest."—Again the wrist was most affectionately pressed, and the promise extorted. With some difficulty I escaped from the room, and afterwards from the house, in possession of Ebenezer.

"Get home, Ebenezer," I said, as soon as we reached the street. "Get home, for Heaven's sake! Keep yourself out of trouble, and avoid these scenes for the future."

"What do you think of him?" enquired the apprentice, regardless of my advice. "Is he not a wonderful man?"

"He's mad drunk!" I answered.

"Oh no! he's not," returned he, "I have seen him so before. He is always excited when new members come to him, and he says it's because he feels so for their unhappy lot. I wish you had waited a little longer. He was just coming to it, and then you would have heard all about the poor, and what is to

be done for them. But you'll go to-morrow—won't you?"

"Yes, Ebenezer, because I have engaged to do so, but not with any hope of reaping benefit from my visit. I do not suppose that I shall see you again. There is nothing to be done for me in Birmingham. I shall try my fortune once more in London. God bless you!"

We were standing opposite the dwelling-house of his master. Much against my will, he had prevailed upon me to accompany him hither.

"Wait a moment," said Ebenezer, "don't go just yet—I feel so wretched. It seems as if I had known you such a time. Do you know I haven't another acquaintance in the whole of the place? I mean one that I can talk to. I say, I have a good mind to run away with you. They'd never find me in London. I think I should rise and make a fortune there. I'll speak to Mr Rational about it."

"Be grateful, Ebenezer," said I, "that you have a roof over your head, and daily bread accompanying your daily labour. It is hard enough to be forced as I am into the streets. You would be mad to rush into them. Starvation awaits you there. Now, good-night; your time has elapsed. Look, there's a light at the window."

"Oh yes! I know; they are going to prayers. Never mind that; but tell me, if Mr Rational gets a situation for you, won't you wait in Birmingham then?

You may as well do that as go to London. I wish you would."

"If he or any man, Ebenezer, will furnish me with employment, you shall find how eagerly I will accept it. We shall see to-morrow. Go home. I am sure they will be angry with you. Good-night."

He did not answer, and I moved gently on. I was half afraid that he would insist upon accompanying me at last. He remained silent for a minute, and then he called loudly after me.

"Stay. Come back for a minute; only one minute. Perhaps," he added, running up to me, "I sha'n't see you again, after all. Search your pocket, and see if you haven't a keepsake. I have got a medal that was given to father when he was a soldier. You shall take it to remember me; and what will you give me for your sake?"

I had about me an old leathern purse—empty, of course—I begged that he would by all means accept it; and wished that it were in my power to offer him something better, or even that with a better recommendation.

"The value's nothing," he rejoined. "Father's medal isn't worth much; but don't lose it on that account, for you'll forget me directly if you do. Can you write?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"Well, I am learning to write too; and in two months, the master says that I shall be able to read

writing as well as any one. Oh, do write me a letter in two months, and then I'll answer it! That's the way with all friends."

"I will endeavour to do so. But, Ebenezer, I implore you to go home. You will be punished, and I shall be unhappy, knowing that I have been the cause of it. You have nothing more to say?"

"Oh yes! I have," he replied; "I have a great deal on my heart, but it's all confused, and I sha'n't think of it properly till you are gone; and then one thing after another comes into my head, as they did last night, and I hate myself because I didn't recollect them when you were here. Ah, there! one thing now," he exclaimed, taking me by the sleeve, "I have just thought of it. You said you told your mother a falsehood, and then you never considered any thing wrong afterwards. Do tell me all about it."

I was in the act of excusing myself from complying with this request, which I saw would lead to enquiries that could not be answered in a night, when the sudden opening of Mr Chaser's door, and the appearance of that gentleman himself, gave a violent impulse to my legs that was not to be opposed, had opposition been desirable, and which effectually and for ever separated me from the interrogatories of the anxious apprentice.

Early on the following morning I returned to the lodging of Mr Rational. I had little inclination for a second interview with this offensive individual; but, having promised Ebenezer to wait upon him, I was

afraid to keep away—afraid lest the uninformed boy, dwelling, as our nature prompts the best of us, rather upon the evil than the good of men, might suffer more injury to observe me failing in one particular, than derive benefit from an attentive listening to all my previous admonitions. I set out accordingly—unprepared, indeed, for much that was to follow. Mr Rational was sitting in his attic as before — the deformed transformed. Every appearance of excitement and inebriety had departed from his countenance. It wore a serious expression, and the repose that accompanies habitual study and contemplation. It seemed the fit and natural expression of that enormous bulk. I had yet to learn the moral teacher's powers of *appropriation.* He welcomed me with cordiality, and beckoned me to a seat. He made no mention of my previous visit, but referred to Ebenezer in the tenderest terms. "He was a boy," said he, "might win a stranger's heart, and he was inclined already towards me for the sake of that sweet lad." There was a homeliness in his mode of speech and in his utterance, that betokened him a man risen from the lower ranks of life, devoid of education; but, in his sober hours, he could display a vivid eloquence and a force of diction that polished minds might envy. Very soon I ceased to wonder that the confiding, tendril heart of Ebenezer had clung so trustingly around this oak. He spoke to me of the infirmity of man: bewailed humanity's hard lot, and desiring, as

I thought, to excuse the proceedings of the previous night, he touched upon the various aberrations to which the mightiest intellects are prone. "But, my young friend, what should this teach us?" he continued—"what, but that we are living in ignorance, in misery, and in sin; in the midst of evils encouraged and increased by the falsest institutions that the foulest error could devise — institutions founded when the mind itself was crude and inexperienced—founded in utter ignorance of our great moral nature. We know little of this nature; we are deceived respecting it. Our notions are irrational—we are imperfect, inconsistent beings. History tells us this. The history of man is the history of lies, deceit, fights, robberies, and murders. Man has striven against man; brother has fought against brother—poverty, crime, and misery, have been the consequence—virtue and happiness have been unknown. What do you say to the man who, regardless of reward and personal advancement, comes in strength to destroy the baneful system, to raze the pestilent institutions, and to build up a new system and new institutions, founded on the immutable, unfailing, and discovered laws of nature—a system, from which, as water from the mountain spring, gush love, riches, charity, happiness, moral and intellectual perfection. I can effect this change, and I come to do it in the broad day, and in the sight of a deluded people. A system," he added with energy, "that shall close the reign of ignorance, of violence, and warfare—that

shall destroy poverty, and take for ever from the human breast all fear or thought of it—that shall remove all impediments to happiness between man and man—that shall bring about abundance—enjoyment —pleasure—endless delights—daily increasing riches —peace, charity, and good-will, now and for ever."

It is a pity that, having faithfully recorded the eloquent preamble of Mr Rational, containing, as it does, so much that looks benign and lovely, and pregnant with benevolence, I am compelled now, by a strict regard to truth, to refer to a transaction militating against myself, and very discreditable to the moral regenerator of mankind. Seduced by the apparent sincerity and actual warmth of Mr Rational, deceived by his sophisms, and fairly enslaved by the liberal and extensive promises that he held out to the eager and necessitous, I became at last * as zealous a believer in his doctrines as poor Ebenezer himself, and quite as ready to submit myself to the discretion and authority of their promulgator. Upon the day succeeding the above interesting meeting, I deposited my trunk of wearing apparel with the polite proprietor of the pawn-shop. The day following that found me placing into the hands of Mr Rational one guinea and fifteen shillings, the sum obtained from the pawnbroker in consideration of my constituting him the guardian of my property; and, upon the third day, the Reformer vanished, carrying with him my little all, and the

* I confess it now—no less to my astonishment than my shame.

savings of a host of humble proselytes. It was necessary that I should lose every thing, in order to know and feel myself thoroughly the scorned—the expelled and castaway. From the fortunate evening when I discovered a means of converting my few fragments of clothes into money, I had buoyed myself up against the pressing tide of unpropitious circumstance with the knowledge that I had wherewithal to shield me from want for many days to come. This knowledge —this safe conviction—valuable as it was for its own sake, was precious, indeed, for the facility and power it gave me to look abroad with calm and settled thought. Famished, and ignorant when and where the hunger might be appeased; cold, shivering, and exposed, without the prospect of shelter or a bed—how could I think—reason—form a plan? How could I hurl from my oppressed, distended mind, burning with apprehension and alarm, appalled with fear of visitations, unknown and fast approaching—the crushing weight of present misery? It was impossible. But the sudden consciousness of my improved state—the feeling of having money—or that which could at any instant purchase it, removed, as with a charm, every distressing fear. It placed the terrors at a distance—where I might contemplate them as one indifferent to their existence, and, surveying them in all their formidableness and on every side, I could prepare to overcome and crush them, or at least receive them with a fortified and governed temper. This

ray of consolation breaking into the dark day of my misfortune, was annihilated, like every other earthly promise, before the light could warm my clouded spirit. Cheated by the plausible impostor, but more deceived by my own half-formed judgment and absurd credulity, I threw into the air the one defence that stood between me and a gaping beggary. It was at mid-day that I discovered the villany of Mr Rational. I left his door, stunned by the information which I had received, and then slowly, and in desperation, I pursued my way out of the hateful town. I passed into the suburbs, intending to walk until my passion should be dissipated, when, if my reason were yet left me, I would drag myself once more home. "*Home! home!*" I repeated the word till I shrieked, franticly laughing. Home for me?—With whom? With the poor ostler, upon whose bounty I had already lived until the food which I meanly gathered at his board stuck in my throat, refusing to be swallowed, held there by shame and self-abhorrence? Was it to him that I could now return? No—welcome starvation rather; and, if it must come, death on the highway. Should I put again to trial the soft and sympathetic heart of Mr Chaser? Yes, to be thrown into the street with vulgar insolence and brutality! Truly that were worth the attempt. Irritated to a degree that admitted not of subjugation or control, I increased my pace, trembling from head to foot with anger and excitement, and repeating my grievances aloud as to a multitude.

Schemes that might never be reduced to practice, were invented by my hot imagination—the only faculty of my mind that could exert itself; and this let loose, became delirious with its freedom—and one after another was disposed of as impracticable, wild, and useless. Still I walked forward, and, with my back upon the city, experienced at least a sense of freedom. For three hours I did not slacken my pace. Reaching, however, a roadside public-house, almost dropping from fatigue, I craved permission to rest my limbs. It was granted me, and the eye of the landlady followed me with suspicion into the tap-room. There I sat, wondering what I should do next. Every thing I possessed was on my back. I had no ties like other men to bind me to a particular spot of ground; I acknowledged no preference for any—the loveliest of nature's heaven-begotten scenes of earth. Generous fields, ripe with the sustenance of life, wherever they might be, in whatever quarter of the globe, were now for me to seek, and, if I found them, there would I recognize my father-land. "And I will wander," I continued, "until I reach them. I cannot be deserted entirely by my God. I shall find a haven yet. Punishment I deserve—I have received; but He is not a God that persecutes unto the end, and who delights in vengeance. I will not falter. Yet have I not read," I asked despondingly, "of poor and famished men, brought to the pass in which I find myself, carrying their inefficient prayers to man,

screaming for bread, receiving in its stead a stone; then lingering on and sinking, till the friendly hedge receives them where they die, less pitied and regarded than men's dogs. It is a horrid death. Heaven, let it not be mine!" I wept bitterly, for tears were as companions, soothing my griefs. The pain was less acute, assuaged and softened by the water drops. I thanked the landlady, and set out again. I did not proceed a hundred yards before a fresh suggestion darted across my brain. I would go at once to London. "If help is to be got," I said determinedly, as if I needed energy and emphasis to persuade myself, "London is the likeliest place to meet with it; and if I die, where is the fitting place for me to lie but near the pauper grave of my poor father? Oh, father!" I cried out, bursting again into wild emotion, "could you have foreseen this dreadful hour—could you have witnessed this completion of your darling plans—what would have been your grief? Heaven was gracious when it carried you to peace—and to oblivion of the world. And my dear mother, where is she with her thousand anxieties—her indefatigable cares—her fears—her mother's love? What would at this moment be the expression of that watchful eye, that in her dear one marked so carefully the earliest shadows of some approaching ailment? How terrible would be the violent motion of that heart, that shook and trembled at the boy's shrill cry of joyousness! These were sickening, maddening thoughts; and, like a mad-

man, I ran along the road, seeking to fling off and to escape the intolerable load. Night came on, bringing with it a lowering sky. Black clouds gathered overhead, and tracked my way. At length, they burst, and rain poured down in torrents. Wet to the skin, and shuddering with cold, I continued my journey. I was no longer violent—I did not weep. I felt that I had reached the height of my calamities; and once upon the summit of bleak misery, as on the naked mountain tops, there is rest, silence, intensity, and breathlessness. My road brought me to a farm-house. It was a rural palace. A fire was burning in a large sitting-room, and its cheerful blaze made visible a dozen happy creatures who formed a circle round the family hearth. A halo of rich light surrounded them. Beyond them, in the room, all was darkness. It was the delicious hour of unutterable felicity—who cannot call it to remembrance?—when the good fire, made sacred by our affections, pours forth a stilly joy that winds into the soul, rendering other light an irksome glare and a profane intrusion. Sweet notes of music caught my ear as I passed the door—some home melody, with power to represent the unruffled peace that dwelt within. I hurried on. The night was growing darker—the storm more violent; the wind howled fearfully, and the rain fell as though the flood-gates of heaven were opened, for a second time, upon a doomed world. A new impulse moved me. I would return to the farm-house, and crave permission to

sleep there—in some barn or outhouse, in any hole where a friendly roof would cover me from the pitiless fury of the elements. No sooner thought than done. I knocked at the door, and begged to see the owner of the house. He appeared; a portly man, with a rubicund face that seemed aware of the soul's integrity, and made it apparent in every look and feature. It was a face that I could trust, and I asked for shelter, convinced that my petition was already complied with. The farmer heard me, and took no time for thought. "Ay, ay, lad," said he; "it won't do to turn a Christian into the storm, just after bringing the animals comfortably out of it. What an awful night it is! I should be sorry to have my dog in it. Here, Willy," he cried out, "take this youngster to the old blue room; make him a fire, and give him supper—and—do you hear?—dry his clothes for him, or we shall be hanged for murder. There—follow the boy," he continued, addressing me, "and get those things from your back as soon as you can."

"It must have been an angel," said I to myself, as I sat before a crackling fire, enjoying a wholesome meal, and clad in a shepherd's dress, with which the good farmer had supplied me, whilst my own was growing dry; "it must have been my guardian angel that whispered in my ear, and gave me courage to turn back. I should have trudged on in spite of every thing, and died perhaps before morning. I shall never forget this kind-hearted creature. Oh, that I

could acquire influence and wealth only to display my gratitude to the few whose ready hands have drawn me from perdition!" Whilst I was thus dreaming, the farmer himself stepped into the room. I rose.

"Never mind, my lad," said he, motioning me to be seated, "eat away, eat away. You are very welcome. I have only come to see how you are. They'll make a bed for you directly. The men breakfast in the morning at six o'clock, and you are quite at liberty to join them. Make yourself comfortable. They are as much at your service as if they were your own. All I have to ask you is, that, for the sake of those that come after you, you won't run away with a blanket or any other paltry thing in the room, as the man did that I gave a bed and supper to last year. My missus has just reminded me of it, or else I had forgotten all about it. It isn't worth your while; for, in the first place, stolen things never do a man good; and secondly, it isn't the thing, and, as I said before, isn't fair to those who are as badly off and more deserving than yourself. I don't mean you," he added, perceiving me changing colour. "I mean such rascals as the fellow I speak of." I assured my benefactor that he had nothing to fear from me, and that misfortune had not yet made me indifferent to honesty.

"I believe you," he answered,—"I could tell it by your looks; but my good lady has seen so much of the world, and has been so deceived, that I don't wonder she is suspicious a little, and looks about her.

Don't mind what I have said—finish your supper, and get a good night's rest, and thank God we have been able to afford you both."

The farmer departed, and, if he did not sleep soundly, it could not be that he had not earned repose, or that self-reproach disordered and discomforted his pillow.

Existence is a history of contrasts and dissimilitudes. Without us and within, sunshine and cloudiness vary with the hour. Sorrow is set off against delight; enjoyment is heightened by misfortune. Our cup of life has mixed ingredients, and the draught is oxymel. Strengthened with a hearty breakfast, and cheered by the return of smiling weather, I resumed my travels, gladdened and encouraged. I did not remit exertion, nor lose confidence, for many hours. Arriving at length at the outskirts of a large city, I halted, and directed my eyes in search of a temporary resting-place. Before an ancient-looking inn, the only house in view, and at a low table, five or six men were seated; by turns talking, laughing, smoking, drinking, but principally occupied in discussing the merits of an old newspaper. Bold with my success at the farm-house, I resolved to apply to this company for succour. Their looks were, upon the whole, good-humoured, and time and place were promising. I had hardly yet acquired the beggar's needful strength of heart, and I advanced towards them with a meek and hesitating step. Drawing near, I overheard one—the

loudest and most disputatious of the party—arguing with vehemence a contested point in the debate. Catching sight of me, he did not pause, but pointed to me with his finger, and fixed upon me the general attention. "Now, there's a fellow," he continued, as if pursuing his discourse—"he's another of them; till you rid the country of such locusts, you'll do no good at all. We are eaten up by vagrants. To jail with them, say I, or transport 'em, sir, at once. I have got a way of treating them." I checked immediately my further progress—and went quickly forward on my journey.

I cannot torture myself by a minute recital of the wretchedness which accompanied me during the five following days. I cannot, even in my age, look back upon that horrid scene, and not be affected with something of the pain I felt in passing through it. One day I lived upon a portion of bread given to me by a charitable baker; and on the same night I slept in an unguarded stable, whither I had crept at nightfall, unperceived by any one. A second day I begged alms upon the road, and submitted, for a few pence, to the most cruel and degrading insult, and reproaches too! Ah, every one was liberal of these; these were to be obtained unasked; reproaches for being an idler and a beggar—for not labouring, as I should, for my support! One gentleman I found most bountiful in this respect, and prodigal of invectives. He was the master of a fine white house and ornamental garden.

In the latter he was promenading with much stateliness when I ventured to solicit his assistance. He started back in great affright, and looked upon me with a killing frown. High iron gates protected him from violence or assault, and, conscious of his advantage, he was bold to overbear and bluster. "Why doesn't the able-bodied rascal get to work, and not annoy the public in their houses? It would be more becoming, fellow."

"It would indeed, sir," I replied, "and much more grateful to the miserable wretch before you. Perhaps you'll give me work, sir?"

"What does the blackguard mean?"

"Or kindly tell me where I may obtain it?"

"John!" cried the gentleman to his servant-man—"here—go fetch the constable. This man will murder me. Look how the monster grins. A pretty thing to insult a householder on his premises. We've stocks, thank God, for beggars! Think of that, fine fellow."—And with this denouncement he strutted off.

Two nights I spent in the open air, gathering what sleep and rest I might at the foot of a large tree. The fourth night, suffering from extreme cold, benumbed and aching in every joint, I crawled to a brick-kiln, hazarding my life—too worthless to be taken—for a little healing warmth.

I reached at last my destination—reached it, broken down, crushed in body and in mind. I had become thin and wan from prolonged anxiety. A

fever was upon me, and my feet were sore and swollen. The first feeling that I experienced on entering the metropolis, was one of vexation and vain regret that I had come so far, at such a cost, without a single object to allure me. "Fool that I am!" I exclaimed, "why did I not wait patiently in Birmingham? Something might have turned up there. I am certain of my fate in London." So tossed and beaten was my unsettled and afflicted mind! How had it held its seat so long?

It was on a Sabbath-day that I found myself again in the great city. I was master of a few pence, which I had received early in the morning, passing through the village of Highgate.

Parched with burning thirst, and having no appetite for solid food, I made my way to a public-house, where I purchased and drank off a draught of ale. There, sitting to rest my tired and harassed body, I took up mechanically the newspaper of the day. It was a print that ministered to the morbid cravings of distempered minds, filled with the weaknesses and vices of mankind, dressing depravity and corruption in gaudy robes, to spare the eye from dwelling on their loathsomeness. It was the poor man's intellectual food. Fit reading for the child of immortality, with his one short day of preparation, dragged from the mercenary hold of worldly traffic! How full of consolation to the bruised spirit toiling for the crust, his eye for ever on the earth—his first and last, his

only home and hope! How ennobling to the human understanding!—how worthy its transcendent scope and grasp! Here was a column of recorded offences, softened down to look harmless and attractive—here one of indecent jesting—here course disloyalty—here witty blasphemy—and here a string of cruel and cold-blooded sophisms—the devil's rhetoric, goading the needy, the helpless, and the ignorant, to discontent, rebellion, and destruction. But there was another column yet. In it, the broken-hearted, the world-weary, and the desperate, might find the sure and easy way of vanquishing their care. Here they might see hardihood, alienated from true valour, rushing upon its fate, and courting death with most unnatural zeal. It was the *suicide's* own column. I read with avidity the accounts, gathered from every province in the kingdom, of those gallant men who, ground by circumstance, escaped her tyranny; with their own hands severing the bonds that held them. I was transported with the more romantic and highly finished pictures imported from foreign lands, where the prurient mind and pen are unrestrained in warm delineation. From these, I knew the faith and constancy of lovers, who, divided in life by cruel destiny, pressed to each other's breast, leaped united into darkness and the grave; the gambler's recklessness—he who, trying to overreach, was himself deceived, and, losing all, staked at last his soul's best hopes for temporary forgetfulness and peace. It was a dangerous

study in my present season of trial and desertion, and I continued it until a resolution to live no longer, and to perish by my own impious act, informed me that I had nothing more to learn. Death appeared here not a grim spectre, as I had been accustomed to regard him, but as a good angel, coming with healing on his wings to conduct the weary and the worn to blissful and eternal quiet; and ah! did not I long for repose, and release from suffering, as the hart panteth after the water brooks! I put the journal aside, and departed from the public-house nerved for the fearful deed. "What," I asked myself, "what, what have I to live for? The love of life, deemed paramount in the heart of man, is extinct in mine. My affections are with the dead—and I will join the dead in death." I walked to the river side, and coolly and deliberately marked on a bridge the spot from which I would cast myself into the water that very night. "No one," thought I, "shall witness the fact—no officious hand shall drag me back to misery, and, when I rise again, no creature will recognize me, and none will be able to aver that I did the deed myself. Thank Heaven, then, I have but one more day to live!" My fever increased, and thirst became again insufferable. My skin was dry and hot, and my body now burned with heat, and now was chilled with cold. My mind was preternaturally calm. I drank more ale, and then I visited the tw churchyards where lay in enviable sleep the authors of my life—that miserable

life, whose flame was burning rapidly to the socket. "Ah, me!" said I, contemplating the humble sod over my poor father, after having spent a long hour at my mother's graceful monument. "What a difference even in graves!" Who questions the universal power of wealth? Who says it may not purchase immunity from sickness, and the ills that flesh is heir to? True, it cannot. But if in this brief sojourning it takes from them the poignant stings that indigence inflicts—and removes some portion of the bitter from the cup that all must drink, its claim to honour and regard is not to be contemned. Well do I remember the gratefulness with which my father spoke of his partner's funeral—how he thanked God that he had been able to bury her with decency and respect, and to place over her dear head the sculptured structure and the engraved memorial! "He could not have lived," he said, "to see her loved remains dishonoured." What had been his own fate? Had I not lived to witness the violation of his sacred corpse? Had I not seen it, in its thin deal case, mingling in a row with a dozen pauper coffins, over whose tenants the one divine service, hastily performed, was all too long and tedious for the ill-paid minister of God? Had I not seen coffin after coffin carried to the remote and well-defined portion of the ground, distant from putrescent respectability and the aristocracy of worm's food? Had I not seen, too—oh! dreadful spectacle—shell piled upon shell, plashing in the watery earth—the topmost not reaching to the

water's thick and mudded surface? Yes, I had seen all this and more, and gazing once again upon the grave, the melancholy scene was re-enacted, and my own dark purpose was confirmed.

It was six o'clock in the evening when I entered the street in which I had dwelt from my birth, until I left it to reside in Cambridge. A foolish desire to look upon the old house, and to take leave of it for ever, possessed me, and had compelled me to retrace my steps, after having arrived for the second time at the river's bank. A superstitious feeling, inherited from my mother, prevailed over the reason that was left me; the visit presented itself to my mind in the form of a duty, and—strange incongruity!—I was afraid to destroy myself until I had religiously accomplished it. The church bells were tolling—calling the multitudes who thronged the streets to prayer, and notifying to me the hour of my departure. I continued still hot from fever, but my mind was wonderfully composed. There was no tumult there—no disorder—no irregular mixing of ideas. I was aware of every thing that took place. I could reason—and, listening to a discourse, I felt myself able to reply to it steadily and fully. If I crossed the road, and passengers encountered me, I stopped suddenly still, bowed, and permitted them to pass on. "Surely," said I, a madman could not do that. He would not be alive to these refinements of behaviour." I intercepted a gentleman on his road, and requested him, with many polite expressions, to

direct me to a neighbouring street. He did so. I answered him again. We parted. It was another instance of my sanity. I endeavoured to recall to memory the events of the last few years. They rose without an effort—one after another—in regular succession. Who should say that my intellect was not as bright as sunshine?

I passed a dissenter's chapel. Many persons, men and women, were hurrying into it. It was a large square building—looking like a theatre, and the folks were crowding about the place like playgoers. A small knot of young men prevented my moving forward. One of them spoke. "Come, old fellow," said he to his companion, "let us go in—only for the fun of the thing." He entered the chapel, and the rest followed. I, scarcely knowing what I did, went immediately after them.

PART VIII.

THE TRANSITION.

"It was a congregation vast of men,
Of unappendaged and unvarnish'd men,
Of plain unceremonious human beings."
POLLOK'S *Course of Time*.

THERE was a pouring in of people, and the large chapel was soon filled in every part. The place was singularly constructed. Its form was square, as already notified: its altitude was very great, and the staring naked walls of white deceived the eye, and rendered the height still greater and more striking. Against one only of the four sides was fixed a gallery—this was opposite to the pulpit; it descended far into the body of the building, and might contain, perhaps, five hundred persons. The desk was placed in the centre of the chapel, at an unpleasing elevation—disagreeable at least to my disordered senses. An aching at the extremities of the body, such as the giddy-headed have experi-

enced looking down from mighty cliffs into the sea, I felt acutely, turning my eye upwards upon the preacher, separated as he was from every other person, and toppling as he seemed with every movement of his body. I took a seat, and marvelled at the individual and collective hurrying of mankind. There was a slamming of doors, a rushing to seats, an absence of devout motion and reverential quiet—all of which I had been taught to regard as opposed to the design and purpose of true religious worship. I had been accustomed to remark in houses consecrated to the Almighty's service, a grave adorning, a modest embellishment, sufficient to dignify without profaning the sacred institutions. Here there was an ostentatious, fierce display of nakedness and discomfort. The very seats were of the coarsest wood, innocent of paint, scarce acquainted with the plane. Instead of the enclosed, well-cushioned pew, with decent lining and convenient hassock, and its neat array of Bibles, prayer-books, psalters, here were pens and boxes, many, it is true, shut in and appropriated to the owners, but the greater number exposed as coops for animals. These, in their narrow confines, never huddled closer than did the multitudes, who sought with eagerness and obtained scant standing-room in the enclosures. Habituated to deem most decorous and godly the solemn and universal bending of the knee, nothing could appear more strange than the heterogeneous and independent acts adopted here by individuals. In one place, a group of six,

wrapt in meditation, standing up, directed their looks towards the preacher. Next to them, another cluster, meditating likewise, rudely turned their backs; some were bending to the left, some to the right; some stood bolt upright, some curved their bodies. A few looked to the gallery or the ceiling: their antipodes cast their eyes upon the ground, The whole were praying, or appeared to pray: not one was on his knees. Such were a few of the marked peculiarities that I could not fail to notice, during the two hours that flew away whilst I participated in the excitement of the congregation. The members were chiefly of an humble class; they were unfashionably attired, but their looks were marked with bold and most expressive character. The chapel was inconveniently thronged long before the arrival of the preacher; and when he at length appeared, the crowded floor, the lighted lamps of oil, the unwholesome and commingled odours, were enough to suffocate and kill him. He ascended the pulpit, and then, as if magically, the din of voices, the unsettled fluctuations of the thousand bodies, the whispers, coughs, and ceaseless humming, were chained and silenced. A breathless quiet instantly prevailed. I turned my restless eye at once upon the minister. He was a tall and graceful man; his cheeks were ashy pale, and his small and deep-blue eye potent even to witchery. No wonder that the multitudinous human sea was lulled to deathlike breathlessness under its bright influence. And what a voice! sweet as heavenly music, and

powerful as melodious. He looked around him, and he uttered a few words ushering in the short prelusive hymn. As one heart, the countless congregation was touched; and as one man, it rose to proclaim and peal aloud the glorious song of praise and adoration. What stirring sounds! piercing far into the depths of my desponding spirit, and eliciting tumultuous joy in the darkest caverns of despair. Chords of sensation—new, strange, and undefinable—were clanging in my soul; and a thrill, now hot now cold—a wild intoxication—a glad delirium—possessed me, and constrained me even to tears. I rose with the crowd, and held the rail before me for support—a needful effort! How calm and passionless was the preacher, with the heated sounds of enthusiastic piety burning at his ears! How meek, subdued, and holy was his countenance! What a contrast it presented to the illuminated and excited looks of that united band of choristers. I could not choose but fix my gaze upon him, coveting his undisturbed and gentle bearing. Happiest of men I judged him. The loud and solemn strain was finished. With the last lingering accents the minister arose, and immediately you might imagine that an angel floated through the building, so perfect was again the stillness. And then he prayed, offering on high, with earnestness and fervour, sweet incense for that holy place; and truly *the children there brought a willing offering to the Lord, every man and woman whose heart made them willing to bring.* Groans of self-conviction, loud affir-

mative responses, accompanied the speaker throughout his heartfelt supplication. Did he implore his heavenly Father to suspend the fire that every moment threatened to consume his children's obstinate accumulated guilt—then did the loud "*Amen*" pass like a watch-word through the suppliant troop, borne from stricken soul to stricken soul on sighs of heaviest misery. Did he change the theme, revert to the munificence and mercy of his Maker, and give glowing expression to the teeming sense of gratitude—how quickly did the combined, reverberant, and passionate "*Hallelujah*" crown the minister's pathetic thanksgiving! Oh, whither had I come? What phantasm flickered before my poor bewildered brain, amusing it with shadows, and detaining me from death, the grave, and longed-for lasting peace. My mind tottered. God help me!—in an instant I was unconscious of my whereabouts—ignorant of my state—self-oblivious. My head burned, my throat was hot, my tongue parched. I stared wildly about me, and with my mad looks challenged the devout worshippers on either side. Suddenly an irresistible impulse to laugh aloud seized and tormented me. My judgment—the lunatic's entangled judgment—suggested the impropriety of self-indulgence, and then raged the hot conflict between eager irrepressible desire, and notions of high decorum; notions not the less inflexible because tinged with the delusive hues of a temporary insanity. Almost choked with the mad strife, I resumed my seat, with my handkerchief thrust into my mouth to check

and smother the unseemly cachinnation. Then a glimpse of reason, like passing sunshine, stole across the clouded intellect, making manifest to consciousness my miserable state, and plunging me deeper and deeper into the abyss of wretchedness. My cheek blazed with shame, and now thoroughly convinced that I was no longer master of myself—that I was really given up to the demon who held men's minds in thrall—I buried my face in my hands, and would have given worlds to escape the searching gaze of eyes which my strange conduct had invited. "Oh, I am mad! I am mad!" I repeated to myself. "I can never look up again—I can never meet their looks—what will become of me?" There was a rustling in the chapel. I heard it, but I dared not glance around me. The minister had ceased. The prayer was at an end. Silence prevailed again; and again it was broken by notes louder than ever, gushing from the overflowing hearts of faithful worshippers. I permitted the shrill tones to pass into my ears, and to stir my soul with elevated thoughts; but jealously I kept my eye in darkness, as though the lightning waited only for the first half-venturing look to strike the orb with blindness. Cold perspiration poured from my forehead, and my fevered hands were moistened. The storm of voices subsided, and once more, silence most intense. "It is the stillness of the spring morn," thought I, dallying with fancy in my gloom, "when the commotion of elements gives place to calm unspeakable. What next? Oh,

celestial accents! That voice is gliding over the turbulent spirit, stilling the waters. Good thought, good thought!" I whispered to myself, "worthy to be written down. Christ stilled the waters, so likewise his ambassador—bright idea!" He pronounced his text. "*This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.*" He spoke of the Father, the parent of that son, and warned his listeners of the debt of love his children owed him. "Brethren," said he, his voice growing tremulous with compassionate entreating—"Brethren, we must love our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. It is the great commandment. Yea, love him with all the ability, with all the faculties, with all the intensity, and with all the illimitedness of the living soul within us. Our love must be as pure, as boundless, and as lofty, as the heavenly spirit breathed into us by God at the beginning, and partaking of his own bright essence. All love less extensive than that of your own soul, born for immortality—less thrilling than that of your entire heart, which throbs and responds with natural emotions, and is, as it were, the very throne and sanctuary of human attachments—less exalted than your own mind, that sublime principle that thinks and acts, reasons and directs—all love less extensive, less thrilling, and less dignified than all these combined, is unworthy of God, and criminal in man. I tell you of the commandment—and oh! is it

come to this, that we must be *commanded* to LOVE the God who created us; who endowed us with powers only inferior to his own; who called into existence, for our use, the lovely and ever-fruitful earth; who arched the blue canopy above us, and gave the sun to warm, the moon to lighten our abode; who has provided for us enjoyment here, and bliss incomparable hereafter? If we were not lost, lost beyond the reach of any redemption—*of any, save* ONE—would not the overflowing mercies of God lead naturally to a longing, a panting, an ever-thirsting desire of love—love that would be satisfied with nothing short of its full expression—love that would admit of no comparison—love that would be equalled only by that transcendant and surpassing love that streams from God to man?"

"Ah!" I exclaimed, pressing my closed eyes with force against my palms, "rave on, and bring if you can the warmth once more into the fleshy heart. Mine is of stone!" A murmur, significant of sorrowing acquiescence, passed through the assembly as the speaker paused. My heart knocked palpably against my ribs, tossed with excitement within me and without. A short interval of quiet, and the minister continued his address. He applied himself strictly to the illustration of his subject, dwelling with fearful emphasis upon the guilty progress of the prodigal—tracking him from the first light footfall of indiscretion, until he met with him at last deep-buried in depravity and corruption. "Fathers!" he exclaimed in a melting tone of

pity—"earthly fathers, are you not here this night bewailing the cruel lot of such a one? Does the history disclose no picture engraven on you souls, which the thin and filmy veil of time scarce covers? The earliest prattle of the fair young innocent rings sweetly in your aged ear; but whither are gone the fond, fond hopes you reared, as the dear creeper clung about your knees? Have you forgotten yet the hour of leave-taking? You have not—you who remember well the big, cold shadow that crawled along your spirit—darkening it with fear and dread, more miserable to bear than heaviest present sorrow. You saw the new-fledged bird fluttering and fleeing from its nest—and, losing sight of it at last, you stood silently weeping. You gave the boy your blessing—and a limb was torn from you when you looked around, and found yourself alone. How little did you dream of disloyalty and betrayal! Who would believe that the strengthened love of years should be forgotten and disregarded in an hour—that the counsel of the firmest and the dearest friend, his requests and supplications, should be cast away, and whirled like chaff before the wind? But the time is short, and the son has reached a far country—his substance is wasted—he riots—he is a curse and not a blessing to the mother that bare him." No accompanying sounds issued from the congregation. The minister for a second forbore, and then a deep, half-smothered groan, forced its

passage from ONE poor wretch's stricken bosom. "The flesh will quiver where the pincers tear." From head to foot I shuddered. "Now, now, to rush away, and drown in the deep waters the grim spectres that oppress my heated brain!" Alas, I could not move! A spell practised upon me, and shame, a threefold shame, heightening with every passing minute, fixed me like marble to the spot. "Poor prodigal!" continued the preacher, "his own most bitter enemy, breaking the parent's heart, but parting for dross with his own immortal soul, spending and wasting in wantonness and harlotry, till the bitter famine comes, and he must sink in dismal want! Behold him feeding the swine of the stranger—yearning for the husks they eat, whilst no man living will give to him. Oh, pity him—pity the prodigal in his misery!" The hot scalding tears rolled down my cheeks. I closed my ears with my hands, but the words had already reached my heart, and it bled and bled on. "Then cometh surely and speedily the terrible hour of retrospection, bringing with it pangs and groans and pitiable regrets—to many, impotent and vain as the idle summer air. Sinking with famine, starving for a crust, he remembers how many good and humble in the world have bread enough and to spare, whilst he perishes with hunger. And shall he perish? Yea, now and eternally, with no accuser, no judge, more vindictive and cruel than his own guilty conscience." The roof of

my mouth was dry and clammy. I tried to moisten it with my hot tongue, and to think of the water side, and the forgetfulness and quiet that awaited me there; but the vision would not come, and the minister's words were a flaming sword before my eyes. "I have spoken to you of the impenitent, the hardened, and the lost. But the mercy of God is boundless as his kingdom, and all are not left to the mercy of a seared and sinful conscience. Grace abounds—and shall snatch some even from the jaws of the fatal gulf. Hark! What moving tones are those which fall upon your ear? Whose remorseful tears make soft the earth's hard pillow, and melt the contumacious heart? It is the prodigal—and it is the clank of fetters that you hear falling from his soul, and setting it at liberty. He will arise and go to his father, and will say—'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' Oh, happy son!—infinitely happy father!—moved to compassion—with the fount of natural affection flowing unrestrained—receive him with thy open arms, take him to thy bosom, and consecrate *repentance* with thy kisses. *Thy son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found—eat and be merry.* Are there none here this night carrying in their guilty breasts a load of sin that will not bear the light? What machinations, what secret plots, what offences against thyself, thy neighbour, and thy God, are rankling even as I speak?

How long shall impenitence prevail—when will you seek forgiveness from the Father? Awake, thou that sleepest—awake, ere the last sleep of all o'ertakes thee, from which it were bliss unspeakable, and better, never to arouse again than rise unsanctified. Look there!—Behold the usurer depositing his treasure at the golden shrine—prodigal of the love he owes to God, and showering it into the lap of Mammon; and there again—the adulterer and the drunkard, with no loftier aim than the gratification of the animal craving—no higher love than the love of their own ignoble dust—meanest—most selfish—least generous of prodigals! And oh, look here!—follow me with your eyes, and mark yon trembling wretch—sure of pardon, and yet too cowardly to ask it—loving death rather than life—sin better than virtue—Satan in preference to God. Shall I read his thoughts? Come forth, thou that shunnest the day, and courtest the dark night for thy foul purposes! Weak and helpless man, stand forth! Dost thou love darkness and the grave so well that thou wilt barter heaven for them, and with one timorous act renounce for ever thy inheritance? I tell you, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red as crimson they shall be as wool. There is no guilt that mercy cannot reach—no crime that repentance cannot wash away—no state which the grace of heaven cannot remedy. Fear not, poor child, to throw yourself upon the

willing clemency of your Father! Fear nothing but the desperate suggestions of the Arch-Enemy of man!"

The eye of the preacher was upon me; I felt it passing through my frame—curdling my blood—startling my spirit. I had no power to keep back. I could not withhold my own excited gaze. It was drawn—dragged from me—by a sorcery that it were to no purpose to oppose. Gradually, and blushing to the forehead, I raised my eye upward; and there, like a bright star, shone full and most benignantly upon me the blue and lustrous orb. I had no longer a sense of shame. It had passed away like a vapour beneath the holy light. The hand of the minister was extended—the finger pointed to me. I listened with transfixed attention. "I am here this night," said he, "with authority and with the means to save you from perdition—*you* sinner—you who would court destruction, and with your own hand seal your eternal fate. Believe not that a violent death shall put an end to the natural consequences of a violent life. Madman, it renders them more terrible, more painfully acute. The woes of him have not begun who seeks to end them in a self-dug grave. The bitterest tears of earth are honey-drops compared with those he sheds beyond it. Take courage. Repent—and be a man worthy your immortal destiny and future glory. Flee from the Tempter. I warn you that even now, this very night, this very hour, this very moment, for the vilest

of mankind, for the poorest of self-condemned and trembling sinners, there is hope—there is joy—there is pardon, if he will seek it with a contrite spirit from the Father of men and King of kings. '*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*' I tell you this not without authority, I speak with the voice of my Master. Before me are my credentials. Scorn them and be lost—believe and be saved." He ceased, or, if he continued, I heard no more. I shook with wonder and alarm. I was satisfied that I had been the subject of a miracle—the more convinced of it, as I attempted to collect the various circumstances which, growing one upon another, had gradually brought me into my present situation. "Here," thought I, "is the hand doomed to pluck me from the consuming fire—the hand that has been fore-ordained from all eternity for that benevolent and gracious object." I could not be deceived. The sermon had been preached for *me*. It met my case. The preacher's eye singled me from the innumerable congregation; and at me—to my very heart, he aimed his barbed weapons—wounding me—lacerating me—but striking only to save. The heavy sweat poured down my cheeks, and I smiled—half conscious of my doings—most gratefully upon the minister. He marked me with close attention, or I grossly erred. I clasped my hands—and internally thanked God, my eyes dropping the while tears of

extreme rejoicing, for the peculiar love which he evinced towards me. "Yes, yes!" I exclaimed, "I will repent—I will throw myself before my Father; I will not destroy myself, but I will snatch my soul from hell." A new song of thanksgiving, the last hymn of the service, sung with new fire and louder acclamation, diverted for a moment the current of my thoughts—but added fuel to the flame that had been kindled. A stranger placed a book in my hand. I joined in the inspiriting anthem, and with a louder voice and stronger emphasis than any other, I invoked celestial pardon—for pardon and repentance were the subject of the song. The ceremony was concluded. The assembly dissolved, as it had come together—in crowds. The minister prayed in silence, amidst the tumult of the breaking-up. I gazed upon him, and dreaded the arrival of the fast-approaching minute that would move him from my sight. My soul clung to him as the anchor clingeth to the ground. He was, indeed, a friend newly found, and worth a world to me. I needed his presence for my support, and without him I feared to meet again with horrible suggestions, and the destroying eyes of the Tempter, which I could feel glaring at my back. The chapel was empty—every individual had left it. Still with entwined hands I stood, eagerly looking at the preacher. Slowly he descended from the pulpit, and not observing me, passed into the vestry. Instigated by an impulse

that defied resistance, I followed him immediately. He was alone—and he turned his mild countenance feelingly upon me. I burst into a flood of tears, and, falling upon my knees, implored him to make good his word, and to reconcile me to my God.

PART IX.

THE HISTORY OF EMMA FITZJONES.

"How read we such sad scenes? As sent to man
In perfect vengeance? No: in pity sent
To melt him down, like wax, and then impress
Indelible, death's image on his heart,
Bleeding for others, trembling for himself."

YOUNG.

My poor overtasked brain reeled with agitation, and I sank motionless and senseless at the feet of the minister. I remember to have been raised—to have heard a few kind words of consolation and encouragement—to have been carried by gentle and considerate hands to a coach—and to have passed at once into a sleep of long forgetfulness. I call to mind, also, the moment of breaking from the bondage of a heavy torpor. I lay in bed in a strange room, and no creature was near me. I knew myself to be awake; but a difficulty of fixing my thoughts to one point satisfied me that consciousness was darkened with disease. A book lay upon my pillow; it was the Bible. I took it up, and attempted to read. It was in vain. I

experienced an acute darting pain at the temples, and the words flickered and glanced about the page. I replaced the book, and courted sleep again. This time, however, she came not—the throbbing in my head increased, and gradually the most poignant sensations harassed my exhausted frame. I would have kept quiet; but although I grasped the sheet and pillow for security and support, I was sensible of locomotion—of being carried through the world—dragged forward without the power of checking the still increasing speed. I had no fear. A wild enjoyment accompanied the impetus, and a satisfying confidence that I should at last be deposited, wherever it might be, in safety. I gave myself up to the impulse more and more, until I experienced a recklessness of feeling that gave velocity to the wings, and intenseness to the power, that whirled me along. Then a flush came over me, and a dry heat swept throughout my frame, resting in my throat and my cheek, filling me with dread of suffocation and a speedy death. What ailed me? Was it fever—was it inflammation making its quick and fiery way straight to the seat of life? And where was I—who had taken charge of me? To whom was I indebted for the care that had been taken of me—for my present lodgement, and for the soft bed that received and eased my aching bones? The figure of the preacher presented itself immediately to my mind, as I had seen him last in the vestry, when he led me into the open air, chafing the palms of my

hands, and urging me on with accents of tenderest compassion. Oh yes! it was enough to behold that eye of benevolence to be assured of the soul's permeability to sorrow and distress. He had guessed my unspoken tale of misery; and the claim which it had preferred with silent power at the Christian's heart, had neither been rebuked nor listened to with unconcern. A small table was at the bedside, and upon it a watch, a few bottles of medicine, a pair of spectacles, some needlework, and an open book. I could hear nothing but the ticking of the watch, and this sounded painfully loud in my ears; white dimity hangings were drawn partially around the bed, and curtains of the same material extended along the window, and kept the room in comparative darkness. I attempted to rise for the purpose of admitting light; but my head swam giddily, and my weak limbs gave way beneath me. I lay panting from the effort, when the door of the chamber softly opened. A tall and stout elderly female entered on tiptoe. She wore a high, matronly cap, and was in other respects soberly attired. She said nothing, but, taking her seat at the table, fixed the spectacles on her nose, turned over the book, and commenced reading.

"Good lady," said I, in a faltering voice, "tell me where am I?"

"Oh, thank God!" she exclaimed, quickly taking off her glasses; "don't worry yourself, young gentle-

man—you'll soon be well now, and dear Mr Clayton will be so happy. Take a glass of lemon drink. You mustn't excite yourself."

I drank the refreshing draught with avidity, and blessed the charitable hand that gave it.

"I am sure you'll get on very quickly now. I only wanted you to revive; but I must go to Mr Clayton and the doctor directly. He told me to fetch him the moment you woke up. How do you feel now?"

"Oh, weak, madam—very weak! My heart beats heavily against my breast, my head is unsteady, and I burn with a scorching heat."

"Ah, yes! I know very well what it is. I have often had it—it's just like it. Your heart beats, and you are all over in a burn. I know it's very bad—poor young gentleman! Bless me, I thought you were never going to wake again. It's the horrid bile you have got. They'll give you something to take it off. Are you thirsty?"

"Yes, constantly."

"Ah, to be sure, that's it! It's going about, but it isn't dangerous. Don't talk—and keep quite still. You don't mind being left alone? I'll not be longer than I can help. If you are tired, you can read the book a little."

The lady left me. I spent a weary hour in an endeavour to compose myself; but my fever rose

higher and higher, and I grew restless and irritable. The elderly lady returned, accompanied by a doctor.

The latter immediately felt my pulse.

"Has there been any shivering, nurse?" he enquired, turning to that personage.

"Oh, a great deal, sir; and he has got that nasty burning pain! My poor dear husband, that's dead and gone, had just the same before he died."

"You are warm, sir, are you not?"

"My cheek is on fire!" I replied—"my brain is hot!"

The doctor sat at my bedside for a few minutes; then prescribed some medicine, and retired, enjoining the nurse to preserve the strictest silence.

"Do not let him speak, nurse. Exclude the light, and keep the room perfectly tranquil. I shall see you in the morning, sir. Mind, Mrs Dolby, he mustn't say a word."

"Oh, leave him to me, sir!" answered Mrs Dolby. "I'll take care of him, poor gentleman."

The kind lady donned her glasses, and once more took up her book.

I turned languidly towards her, and found her little occupied with the volume, but mumbling some words to herself in a species of mute whisper.

A sharp pain across my brain caused me at the same instant to wince, and to moan deeply.

"What's that?" enquired Mrs Dolby, and removing suddenly her spectacles.

"My head, nurse—my poor head!"

"Oh yes! I know; it flies about. It's rheumatics. It'll go all over the body. Poor Mr Dolby was a martyr to the pains. It's a kind of stitch, isn't it? Now, I should say, your heart's a little better—am I right?"

"It doesn't beat quite so fast, perhaps," said I.

"No, I am sure it doesn't. Oh, bless you, I have seen so many of these cases! There's poor Mr Williams over the way at No. 5—ah, I shouldn't wonder if I am called up to-night to lay him out—his wife's a poor helpless thing enough, and would no more know what to do with a corpse than a new-born infant—she has sent here twice this morning to know if I should be in the way—poor man, he can't last above a day or so! Well—I've known him to have the rheumatics so bad, that in the course of ten minutes he has had a pain in every limb of his body. It has begun in the great toe of his right leg, gone up his side, down the left leg, and out of the other great toe at last—made a regular revolution. But you mustn't talk so much. Dr Meadows says you are to be kept perfectly quiet."

A dry burning sensation oppressed me, and I called for drink. Before I could swallow it the heat had passed away, and I shuddered with cold.

"That's the lemon drink!" exclaimed Mrs Dolby. "It will do that at times; but your stomach must be

dreadfully out of order. The fact is, you have had one of my old attacks, and it will take its own course. It's more alarming than dangerous. Well, I'm truly glad he didn't order leeches. I couldn't touch a leech to save my life. I have hated the sight of them ever since my dear husband bled for six hours without stopping. Folks say they are harmless. I never could believe it. But you really mustn't be allowed to talk so much. Now, try and go to sleep."

I made the attempt, but during the long dark night I was a waking sufferer. In the morning, overcome with lassitude, and yielding to the potent drugs which I had taken, I dropped into a thick and heavy sleep. After the lapse of a few hours I again awoke, and the fierce grasp of disease seemed for a period withdrawn. I received a second visit from the physician. He observed me attentively, and addressed Mrs Dolby.

"Nurse," said he, "we are better."

"Quite a different creature, sir. May he take a little nourishment?"

"Yes, a little, but a *very* little. Something very simple."

"Some beef-tea—or a mutton chop done *rare?*"

"Not just now, nurse," said the doctor quietly. "Some gruel, if he wishes it—nothing richer for the present."

"Well, you know better, sir, of course: but when dear Mr Dolby's leg was bad"——

The doctor took his hat, and was about to depart—but I beckoned him back.

"Where is my benefactor?" I asked, my frame trembling with newly awakened emotion, "where is the good minister?"

"Not a word," said the physician, assuming an air of mild authority, and placing his finger on his lips. "You shall see him when you are able to bear the interview, and that time will soon be here. He is anxious to see you, and I shall not keep him away longer than is necessary for your safe recovery. He takes a warm interest in your welfare, and I shall gratify him with the news that I am enabled to communicate this morning."

The heart of the beggar was fluttered, and the tears burst from the grateful fount. "There," continued the physician, "I have done wrong. We have already spoken too much. You are weaker than you think. Quiet is absolutely necessary for your safety. Nurse, do not let him utter another syllable. Good-by, my friend—God bless you!"

"Certainly not!" ejaculated Mrs Dolby. "Oh, he's a clever man is Doctor Meadows!—Don't you think so, sir?"

I nodded in the affirmative.

"It's a thousand pities he doesn't marry. All my ladies long to have him, and if he'd take a wife to-morrow, I'd undertake to pay the expenses only with confinements. The poor about here will have no one

else; and I can tell you, though they pay nothing at all, they are more squeamish and particular than any. Now, do keep quiet—there's a dear young gentleman," continued Mrs Dolby, alarmed because I turned in bed; "we must mind the doctor, or we shall do no good at all. Let me read to you a bit."

The scrupulously exact nurse commenced the didactic history of a converted Somersetshire lad. Before she had proceeded far, the distressing symptoms of my intermittent fever returned upon me with their earliest force. I could feel the hot suffocating flush creeping through my frame, and extending to my heart. My thoughts grew restive, and would not be fixed. Wild conceits, the immature creations of an overfretted mind, crowded into existence one upon another; and the quick blood, driven from its seat, beat like a hammer in the artery. Another weary night of continual motion and distress—another never-ending period of bodily pain and mental torture. In this state I remained for a week—comparatively placid and at ease during the first hours of the day—but becoming the subject and the slave of fierce tormentors as the day waned, and the black, the horrid, and the dreaded night advanced. Morning, noon, and night, I endeavoured to chase away the diurnal visitants with noxious and disgusting drugs; but whilst my frame shook beneath their operation, the demons were still unscared, and still haunted as obstinately as ever the tottering house of flesh. How and why they deserted

it at last, I know not; but a day arrived, and they had flown, carrying with them from my very bones the marrow and the juice of life. I was cast upon my back drained of every energy, exhausted and spent. Nature, however, left to her own beneficent will, was not slow to repair the violent inroads of disease. Awhile she looked about her to survey the injury, and then—at first with unperceived and mild appliances, but soon with manifest and vigorous power—lost not a moment in the restoration of the citadel. The physician had been a faithful friend, and Mrs Dolby not useless at the bedside of the patient. Hers must have been a life of suffering and trial. Not a pang did I experience during the progress of my malady which she did not realize, and could not tally to the exactly corresponding pang that she had felt some twenty years before—not a symptom had I that was unknown to her—not a medicine did I swallow whose efficacy she had not tested. For every groan and throe she gave a formal cause—for every change of feeling a satisfactory explanation. In truth, many acute sensations and much uneasiness difficult for their victim to define, though hard enough to bear, she could immediately unravel and expound, and, if you pleased, trace to their first germ and origin. Greatly she respected the apothecary and the physician; but she was not forgetful of the nurse's higher claims to veneration and regard. She was aware how onerous were her duties, and how boundless ought to be her

learning; and, rather than confess her want of knowledge in a single point, she was content to be suspected of an universal ignorance.

I gathered from Dr Meadows the history of the last few days. It was a short one. Whilst in a state of insensibility, I had been conveyed to my present lodging at the instance of Mr Clayton. That benevolent man had provided for me medical attendance, and the all-powerful aid of Mrs Dolby. He had engaged to discharge every expense that might be incurred, and had requested that nothing should be left undone that was necessary for my restoration and comfort.

"He is an old friend, I presume?" said Dr Meadows.

"He is the kindest and the best of friends," I replied; "but until the day he brought me here I was a stranger to him. I never saw him before. You do not know how much I am indebted to him. I know and feel what he has accomplished for me. Twice he has saved my wretched life; but he has done much more than this. I never can repay him, but his reward awaits him elsewhere."

"He will come to you to-morrow," said the doctor; "he has desired me to tell you so. But do not excite yourself. You are touchwood and tinder, and may yet spoil all that has been done for you. You must behave better."

The morrow came, and at an early hour I received a visit from my benefactor. He approached my bed with

a soft and careful step, took my hand in silence, and looked upon me with tenderness and compassion. I pressed his hand to my lips, and wept upon it, for my full heart would else have burst.

"Thank you, sir—thank you, sir!" I endeavoured to articulate.

"Say no more," replied Mr Clayton, very gently. "God has been merciful to us both. Compose your mind, and think, for the present, only of improving the talent that has been restored to you. Your health is now the first consideration. When you have recovered that, we shall find many opportunities to revert with pleasure and improvement to the past. I will read to you now."

Without further discourse he took the Bible from my pillow, and read aloud one of the later chapters of the book of Job. Once more his melodious voice was heard like home music stealing upon the spirit after a separation of years. It was not difficult to apply the text, but a significant glance of his expressive eye was his only allusion to my analogous condition; and when at such moments our looks met, the joy that beamed from my countenance seemed but to reflect that which shone so sweetly in his own. Before he left me that morning, he knelt and prayed at my bedside; and *when* he left me, it was to commit me to the sacred charge and company of angels. Peace unspeakable purified my bosom, and comfort lulled it—medicinal, healing comfort, dispensed in heaven for the wounded

spirits of men. Cheaply had been purchased the blessed hour of rest celestial, of respite, of content, of reconciliation—yea easily, though every sorrow had been doubled, every smart increased a hundred-fold. All pain and persecution were forgotten or swallowed up in the fruition of the blissful moment. I had been snatched from destruction, from death, and worse than death—the enmity between my Maker and myself had been appeased. I was an outcast in the world no longer; but a human heart beat and throbbed for me, and was alive to my present and eternal welfare. Again I read the passages which Mr Clayton had chosen for my instruction. Again the balm flowed flatteringly to my soul—new comfort, fresh—rejoicing, elevated and upheld me. Who will declare that the dreams of night borrow not their beauty and deformity from the waking day? That night I passed in heaven. Light and glory were about me; ministering angels welcomed me amongst them; and, amidst the immaculate host, a holy calm sustained and cheered me.

A fortnight flew away in the society of the minister. I need scarcely say, that I took an early opportunity to acquaint him with every incident in my career. I concealed nothing. My errors and my guilt I revealed to him as freely as the remembrance of them occurred to my own mind. I conducted him through my various fortunes, my temptations, and my trials; and told him how at last I had been checked by his

admonishment, stung and startled by his denunciations. Well he repaid me for the confidence which I reposed in him. He vouchsafed me his sympathy, and assured me of his friendship. He listened to my history with attention, and the eye of the Christian was more than once during the recital dimmed with involuntary tears. He was anxious to convince me that he indulged no idle curiosity, nor for his own gratification jagged the wounds which had been reopened by my sickening narrative. Never had I met so simple-hearted and so pious a man, alive to the dignity and importance of his calling, and asserting his title without flinching, and without regard to the opinions and actions of others. He pointed out to me, without reserve, the true source of consolation—the only rock upon which I could build with safety, and endure the buffeting of winds and waters, and not be overcome.

"You have indeed," said he, "been wonderfully preserved. To me you owe nothing—to Him, whose humblest instrument I am, you are incalculably indebted. Let me teach you how best you may discharge that debt, and let me see you pay it willingly. I shall be well rewarded then for the little help I can afford you." He gave me, for perusal, books of a serious but exalted character—books that urged the afflicted on to their true rest, and gave them hope and confidence on their journey. I read them eagerly, and pleased my teacher with the account I gave of

them, and with the enquiries which they suggested. Now a subject for examination would be elicited from the volume, and difficulties, which to my unpractised mind seemed insurmountable, gave easy way before the lucid clearness of his intellect, his quick discernment, and his facility of analysis and distribution. I was prepared to give him credence almost before he spoke; and when, from his eloquent lips, fact upon fact came forth, argument accumulated upon argument, and inference on inference, my faith became immovable, my attachment to the minister and his principles as relying as it was unbounded.

Then we walked abroad together. Winter had passed away, and the spring leapt into life, bounding from budding infancy into the blush and bloom of girlhood, with mirth exuberant. It was the month of May—the month that, not unaptly, by the poet's fancy has been styled *a kiss* given by heaven to earth —earth that is a maiden yet, hereafter to become a mother. Our walks would lead us far from the city's noise, to spots where spring most loved to show herself, arrayed in giddy liquid sunlight, and gemmed with emerald studs innumerable. Balmy had grown the air, and sweet of scent—earth, no less than my own loosed spirit, had thrown aside her sad and heavy yoke, and had resumed the healthy joys and pleasures of her prime. The impulses of a second boyhood were my compensation for the wintry season of adver-

sity that I had seen and suffered. Our favourite retreat lay within convenient reach. An hour's gentle walk from the metropolis brought us to fairyland—in truth, a place for dwarfs and elves to revel in. It stood upon an eminence; London darkling at its feet, and the winding Thames beyond, threading her sinuous way silently to the sea. Hill and dale were there, smiling glades and sober woodland. Nature donned a hundred dresses there to charm her worshipper, and save his mind from weariness. Every variety of shape and hue that she commands, crossed the gazer's eye, filling it with beauty. Our seat was on a small round hill—a knoll—the highest of a group of hills that capped the favoured scene. Here, as we sat surveying the vaporous and hazy city, serene and cheerful thoughts prevailed, and hopes bright as the sky above, towards which they turned. Many a lesson, suggested by the locality and the wide-spread vista, was communicated by the minister to his attentive and desirous listener. Natural piety, the spontaneous growth of natural beauty, gave ready ear and access to the solemn doctrines of her sublimer sister, and love was sanctified by heavenly truth. Now the dusky veil that enveloped the huge metropolis induced the idea of moral taint and spiritual darkness; and the likeness was exhibited, the parallel insisted on, until the bodily eye, quickened by the preacher's eloquence, beheld in the dark vapours, sin, dense and impure,

reeking upwards to the gates of heaven. Tranquillity and embodied loveliness dwelt around. "So peaceful and so fair," said he, "the renewed and chastened spirit of the Christian, so unobstructed and so clear its heavenward view—so lucent and so silent sweet its pure unsullied atmosphere." Nor am I yet unmindful of our lingering and too short journey home, how from every tree, and shrub, and early flower, was extracted food for the mind and meditation—how knowledge surprised and charmed my awakened intellect, as the voice of *the minister* became hushed, and he spoke as the preceptor and the friend, expounding to my wondering senses the mysterious operations of a beauteous creation.

Time sped on golden wings. Daily my affection ripened towards my friend, daily his regard and love for me increased. One, and one consideration only, stood between me and consummate happiness; but that, alas! existed to mar and to embitter every moment of my too blissful state. I still lived upon the bounty of my preserver—was dependent upon him, not only for every high and intellectual enjoyment, but for my daily food and raiment. In the possession of strength and vigorous health, I was an idler and a hanger-on. This feeling, irksome under any circumstances to endure, became intolerable when I heard, as I did by chance one day from the lips of Dr Meadows, that the pecuniary condition of Mr

Clayton was, as he understood, any thing but prosperous, and rendered it incumbent upon him to confine his wants and desires within the narrowest sphere; that his office yielded him a very moderate revenue, and that his resources from other labours were limited indeed. "He is unmarried," said Dr Meadows on this occasion, "and well for wife and children is it that he is, seeing that in all probability they would be condemned to share his own hard fate. I never knew a man so utterly regardless of himself, so constant in his endeavours to secure the happiness of others. The meanest of his pensioners, and he has not a few, is better lodged and boarded than himself. It is difficult to conceive a character so thoroughly unselfish." Such information did indeed increase my gratitude, and give intensity to my reverence and regard; but it did more than this—it filled me with a creeping sense of shame and self-upbraiding, and made me look forward to the next interview with my benefactor with an impatient and feverish anxiety. "I will no longer," I exclaimed, "be a burden to the good man, preying daily and hourly upon his substance! I will not suffer evil tongues to whisper calumny against me, as they surely will, nor—much greater punishment to bear—permit one unkind, unworthy thought against me, to harbour in his own generous and gentle mind! I will thank him upon my knees for the past, and, blessed with the wisdom

he has taught me, seek elsewhere a home for the future." Speedily I made my intention known to Mr Clayton.

"Whither would you go?" enquired that gentleman, when I had finished.

"I cannot tell, sir," I replied; "I will seek employment."

"And not finding it at last—what then?"

"Oh, I shall be successful! I do not doubt it."

"Do not deceive yourself, young friend: *I* doubt it much. We forget in health the pains and trials of our previous sickness. Prosperity loves not to remember her former sad companion, pale misfortune. Throw yourself once again upon the world, friendless and unsupported, and again you sink. We must not think of it. I must not allow it. Believe me, I have not thought little of your future plans, and I have hoped to help you effectually. In one quarter I believed myself to possess influence and interest. I employed them on your behalf, but found them less efficient than I had supposed. I was disappointed, and, for your sake, grieved. It is a common occurrence, and should not dishearten us. I have turned my view in another direction: this time, I trust, with a better chance of success. But if we fail again, history and experience teach us not to despond at the outset of our attempts. Time is before us—why are you so eager to forsake me?"

"Dear Mr Clayton," I replied, "my heart is full

with the warm recollection of your bounty. I cannot think for an instant of your generosity—your charity —and not feel that heart bounding with grateful emotion. But my conscience tells me that I do wrong in remaining longer here. I am wretched and uneasy. I am restored to health—able to work—and I have no right to rob you of your means."

"Indeed you have not," replied Mr Clayton with a smile, "and far be it from me to encourage so felonious a proposition. But we are not accustomed to say that they are robbed who freely part with what they have; much less they who, for their money, ask and obtain their money's worth. Have I not purchased your convalescence? Do I not see a living soul snatched from uncertainty and peril, brought back from darkness and its terrors, to light and all its blessedness? So much I proposed to myself—so much I have gained. I believe I have—God be praised for it! Would you deny me the pleasure that I have bought at such little cost? Would you refuse me the satisfaction and delight that moves an aged heart with something higher than mere earthly bliss?"

I knew not what to say.

"No, my dear friend," he continued, "this head would scarcely lie easy on its pillow, disturbed with doubts and fears respecting you. Willingly, I am sure, you would not give me pain; unwillingly you shall not, if I can help it. Reconcile yourself for one week longer to your present situation, or, at the latest, two.

If I am not mistaken, fortune will do something for us in the meanwhile. Your ambition is not at war with your happiness, and consequently gives us a chance of satisfying its demands. Selfish as we all by nature and of necessity are, I believe that I can resign you when the proper time arrives. Come when it may, I shall be honest enough to confess that it is still too soon."

I returned the affectionate pressure of the good man's hand, but my overloaded heart forbade a single word.

"Pardon me," continued Mr Clayton, "if I revert to other matters. I will not tell you, that to give you one unnecessary pang would be a bitter thought to me. You are already convinced of that. Let me believe that I can recall the past, and bring along with the remembrance only that improved and chastened sorrow which it becomes the wisest and the best of us to bear, whilst we dwell upon past error and transgression. I have not hitherto distressed you with enquiries; that from a stranger would be deemed impertinent, though hardly so, I trust, in one who looks upon you with a father's eye. And let them not distress you now. We must not flinch from duties, however painful, which our own imprudence has made it necessary for us to undergo."

"Speak on, sir."

"I have not forgotten the history of your connexion with that unfortunate woman whom you met

in Cambridge. You told me that you left her, as you believed, on her dying bed. Have you seen her since?"

"I have not, sir. My father remained but one day in Huntingdon. His short stay enabled him just to see the poor girl placed safely in the infirmary. On the evening of that day, I attempted to take leave of her. She was still delirious, and did not recognize me. Her glazed eyes shrank from me when I approached her, and she screamed as before, '*the fiend, the fiend!*' It was a miserable sight!"

"And what news of her from that time?"

"Alas, sir! I acknowledge with shame that my proper misfortunes, my own deplorable state, have made me—I dare not say *indifferent* to her fate—but not so careful in respect of it as indeed I ought to have been."

"And the wretched prostitute," continued Mr Clayton, "is another victim added to the endless list—doomed to perish an outcast of her kind—scorned and smitten by the hands that might have raised her penitent from infamy and shame."

"It is a dreadful case, sir."

"It is much worse; it is a *common* case—so common, that, like the hourly miracles of God, it permits our awe to slumber on the neck of custom. Revolting as is the first gross sight of loathsomeness, the eye is too soon satisfied to look upon it with equanimity, and as a thing of course. Poor, helpless, persecuted

woman! Fond, credulous simpleton! flattered and cajoled till she is won and lost—then despised and trodden down. Will example—will the late shrieks of an abandoned sisterhood never strike you with alarm, never rouse you to courage or a sense of shame? When will you be taught that the bondage of evil passion is the fiercest slavery to endure? Mr Stukely, be sure of this: of all the objects that are presented to our abhorrence, none so much needs and claims our tenderest compassion as the harlot—few are so deserving of it. I speak advisedly. Pursue her history until you trace her to her early home, and find your heart melting at the humble but contented family fireside. The youngest and most joyous of the happy group is she whose loud and innocent laugh lightens the abode, and on whose cheek the rose blooms throughout the year—haggard and ugly now it is, and whiter than the pillow that will not give it rest. What has so fair a child committed, that treason should be taught her artless soul, and that the inextricable web should be coiled around her young imagination? She lived in all the loveliness of unsuspecting girlhood, till her artless ear was gained, and the passionate heart was touched and fearfully disturbed. Reason is banished when usurping self-indulgence reigns—and then the victim falls, blinded by passion and ignorant of danger, until the blow has struck, ruined, and destroyed her. There is one moment of waking consciousness. It is that which finds her in the abyss of degradation—the

sport and mockery of men—the hated and the scorned of women. Pity, sympathy, and sorrow, they are not for her, and never again shall the soothing sounds take the sting from her earthly sufferings. She is driven from the poor paradise of the world, and a flaming sword is brandished at every avenue, forbidding her return. One road without it leads her deeper into guilt; but food is there, and life, dear to the vilest! Save her from it, if you will—condemn with mercy if she is doomed to follow it."

"What can I do, sir? what shall I do? Teach me my duty."

"You shall accompany me to Huntingdon," answered Mr Clayton calmly; "we must enquire into the fate of this unhappy woman. If she yet lives, we must reclaim her. If she is already dead, God, who hears the last imperceptible breathings of his children, and registers the unspoken yearnings of a broken heart, will have had mercy on her soul, and taken her to himself. It is just and charitable to think so. You will accompany me, will you not?"

"Oh! gladly and most gratefully; but"——

"But what? I have time, the opportunity, and the means. Not to take advantage of them, would be to act the part of an unfaithful steward. There is no need of delay. We will set out to-morrow."

It was so arranged, and Mr Clayton changed the subject of our conversation.

I am an old and downward bending man. The

hand that guides my ready pen has lost its springiness, and begins to feel the loosening touch of age. It trembles as it moves; gray has grown my hair, wrinkled my cheek. My gait is feeble and uncertain. Pains that have their origin in no disease visit my shrunken limbs—admonitory messengers! My failing eyes are turned perforce upon the earth—mother and nurse of men!—and looking ever to her, I remember still how soon I needs must slumber there. But be the hour of dissolution near, or be it distant, one joy shall bear me company to the cold grave's edge. God be thanked for it—my *heart* is young! Age cannot cool or wither it. Now, as of yore, it swells at sights, the commonest in creation, beneath a summer sky, upon the glassy water of the illimitable sea. Music shall ruffle it with maiden's dreams—the sun at day-break stir from its depth the germs of high unspoken poetry. Now, as in its earliest spring, when all without was decked in coloured hues, and life looked so much fairer than she was — that heart will still beguile itself with brilliant bubbles, and, travelling on with hope, thrive and grow rich upon the unsubstantial future. Now too, as ever, that heart shall spread abroad on every object it may reach, its saddening griefs or elevating joys, attuning to its own deep note the breathless voices of a universe. Gladsome and merry were those voices heard when I retraced the road that led to Huntingdon. Once before I had travelled through it, and then black night

dwelt in my soul. Winter had been the season, and not more icy or more bare the prospect than my own cold and isolated spirit. Discord prevailed, and the sounds of life—not less those of the bleak winds that spent their fury on the defenceless trees, than the stifled murmurs of my harassed bosom—were moans and lamentations. The day of my return was bright and warm, and the sun's hot rays were fanned by the brisk invigorating air. White woolly clouds swept gleefully across the azure sky, chasing one another to the west, as though they feared the sun would reach his rest without them, and they lose half the glory of his setting. The light ash waved its boughs as we quickly passed along, welcoming our presence and smiling on our errand. The tall and towering poplar quivered with animation to her topmost leaf, and hedgerow flowers peeped from their covert nest, their untouched dew dripping from the cups, pure and clear as tears of ripe felicity. Streams, no longer stiff and ice-bound, gurgled with delight, and for every breezy kiss yielded a thousand liquid dimples. Oh, heart of man! quick to apprehend beauty, and to wed the inanimate things of earth to thoughts that never die—heart that overflows with thrilling sensibilities—thou needest only to be pure to attain triumphant consummation *here.*

We arrived in Huntingdon late at night, and went immediately to an inn. Mr Clayton, fatigued from the journey, retired to rest without delay. We were

within a street of the residence of Dr Weezen. My curiosity prompted me to enquire after my old friend, and I sought our landlord for that object. In answer to my question whether he knew a gentleman of that name living in the town, he placed a county newspaper in my hand, bade me turn to the report of trials, smiled, and shook his head.

"What is this?" I asked.

"Manslaughter!" was his reply, "and within an inch of murder. I was on the jury, and I think I saved his life. It is more than he ever did for fellow-creature yet."

"What has he done?" I asked again.

"Read," he replied; "killed a youth that never offended him."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "I was afraid that it would come to that. He was a desperate adventurer."

"Read his defence," continued my informant; "you'll find he is a desperate fellow altogether. As for talking, the lawyers were a flea-bite to him. 'Science,' he told the judge, 'would revenge upon his tyrants the fate of her disciple.' He spoke his mind to judge and jury."

"How did he accomplish the dreadful act?" said I.

"By what he called the *hot-water cure*. He had made many discoveries—this he considered his last and best. He boiled his patients. For the last six months,

whatever the disease, he put them in a copper. For cold or fever, fulness or consumption, in his own words, 'he *simmered* them.' It brought, he said, the sickness to a crisis. If it would stand the boiler it would stand any thing, and science couldn't reach it. The poor boy was skinned— he had cast his slough as clean as any serpent."

"And his punishment?"

"You'll see it all there. Five years' imprisonment. His shop's shut up, and the mortality amongst the poor, I am thinking, will be much less in Huntingdon for the next five years at least."

"Did you ever hear of a young man and female whom he had lodging with him some eighteen months ago?"

"Never. I knew nothing of the man himself until this affair was blown about."

I thanked the landlord for his news, wished him good-night, and retired to rest myself. I dreamed of Emma Fitzjones, and was once again driving with her rapidly through the streets of Huntingdon.

Early on the following morning my travelling companion and I visited the infirmary, and requested an interview with the matron of the institution. A lady dressed in a black silk gown, armed with a noble bunch of keys, and *matronly* in all respects, received us. Mr Clayton spoke to her.

"I come, madam," said he, "to learn something of

the fate of a poor girl who many months ago was admitted into this establishment. Her name is Emma Fitzjones."

"If you are a professional gentleman, sir, and know any thing to her advantage," said the matron, interrupting him, "I can only say that I am very sorry she is not living to enjoy it. She has been dead some time, poor creature!"

"*The punishment of mine iniquity was accomplished.*" The words of the matron struck leaden-healed upon my soul. To have had no share in the past—to have forgotten it for ever—to have been freed from the manacle that linked me to the fortunes of the departed—what would I not have given? Vain aspiration! The past is irretrievable.

"I am not, as you suppose, connected with the law," said Mr Clayton; "we came to be of service to the deceased. We would have been her friends. We arrive, unfortunately, too late."

The matron turned her eyes toward me as my companion spoke, and shame, or whatever it might be, gave me the pallid aspect of a criminal. I could feel it on my cheek.

"Surely you are not Mr Stukely?" enquired the lady suddenly, causing me in every joint to tremble.

"Yes, madam, that is my name," I faltered.

"Heaven bless me!" she ejaculated, "this is" ——. She hesitated, stopped—burst into tears, and hurried from her seat. "Pardon me, gentlemen," she

continued, sobbing—"it was so sudden—it brought so many things to mind. She died in my arms. I loved her like my own daughter. She was an angel—and used most cruelly."

"You know her history?" said Mr Clayton.

"Every letter of it," answered the matron. "I would have given a hundred pounds, sir," she added, speaking again to me, "if I could have seen you before she died. It would have been a comfort to the poor Magdalen. I sent to Cambridge, and was referred to London. I wrote to you there, but my letter was returned to me with 'gone away' written on its cover."

"She died penitent, then?" said Mr Clayton.

"Oh, indeed she did, and like a lamb! She recovered from her dreadful disorder, but her body was very weak, and her mind sadly distressed. She never recovered her strength, nor did she wish it, poor sufferer!" continued the matron, wiping her eyes with her handkerchief, "longer than to enable her to make her peace with God, whom she had so much offended. I have a remembrance for you, Mr Stukely, which I promised faithfully to deliver to you if ever the opportunity offered. It was only the day before she died that she told me how satisfied she felt that one day you would come to see her, and that you were then detained by circumstances you could not overcome."

"Her last hours were very happy?" I asked hesitatingly.

"Yes, certainly her last; but there were many passed in bitterness of spirit — in fear and self-reproach. At first her state was very pitiable; she had nothing to hope from the past—every thing to dread from the future. She hated life, and was terrified when she thought of quitting it. I did the little I could to pacify and calm her; but it was our chaplain who first enabled her to take peace to her agitated soul. He was her friend to the last. Dear me! I never shall forget to the latest moment of my existence, and I am sure I shall think of it upon my deathbed, how she gazed up at me the day after her fever had left her, and tried to squeeze my hand, and to wring compassion from my looks. She was very much alarmed, and her voice was as hollow as the grave. 'Nurse,' said she—for she took me for the nurse—'I have read in some old book, that in the next world there is a black and horrid vault, where many million souls are screaming for a death that never comes—where the usurer is forced to drink continual draughts of molten gold—where the murderer is stabbed for ever, but never killed—and, worse than all, where burning oil is poured down the drunkard's throat without cessation. Oh, nurse!' said she, 'shall I be doomed to such a punishment? shall I be sentenced to pass eternity in such a vault?' I assured her she would not; but I couldn't give chapter and verse for

what I urged, and she had little comfort, poor soul! until the chaplain came, and led her to the true fountain."

At this moment a knock at the door interrupted the conversation. The business of the day had commenced, and the presence of the matron was required in twenty different places. Food for the healthy as well as for the sick must be supplied, and the good lady must administer the rations.

"I am very sorry," said the matron, "that I must leave you now. When do you quit the town?"

"Our mission is fulfilled," answered Mr Clayton; "we have nothing more to do. We shall return to-night."

"Let me see you for an instant before you depart," said the lady, "and wait one moment now." She left the room in haste, and shortly came back with a sealed packet in her hand. It was addressed to "Mr Stukely, London." "She bade me place it in your own hands. It was all she had to leave you, and she was sure you would not think less kindly of her on account of its contents. I repeat her dying words. And this is the remembrance that I spoke of."

I took the packet, and returned with my friend to our inn, having engaged to see the matron again previously to our departure for London that evening by the mail. I had nothing to say upon our road. My mind was busy with scenes which my late interview

and familiar streets brought painfully to view. Time mis-spent, wickedly spent, and fruitful in lamentable events never to be improved, never forgotten—this was the heavy thought that pressed upon my spirits, and kept me silent. My companion likewise abstained from talk; he it might be with consideration and design, and to permit the salutary working of that thought upon the heart and conscience of the offender.

I lost not a moment, after we had reached our room, in possessing myself of the enclosure. Mr Clayton would have retired; but I begged him to remain, and to witness the last communication of the unfortunate being in whose fate he had taken so kind an interest. I broke the black seal of the parcel, and found an ordinary school writing-book. Upon the cover was written, in a clear lady's hand, the following words—"*To Mr Stukely, in memory of the writer;*" and on the first page, in the like handwriting, this announcement—"*The sad history of Emma Harrington.*" With the same feeling, and at the same moment, we drew our chairs to the table. I placed the manuscript in the hands of Mr Clayton, and he read aloud to me the following narrative.

THERE is only one vice of which it can be truly said that it is the parent and begetter of all other vices—that it dooms its subject to destruction, certain and complete, and drags into the inevitable ruin every tie and every soul connected with the slave and

victim of the lust. It is the vice of drunkenness. For centuries the tenure of this consuming passion has been the miserable inheritance of my race. I trace it up to the first discoverable shoot of the unsound tree—the canker is coeval with its origin. The patrimony descends to me, and there, I thank my God, becomes extinct! The purpose for which it was originally attached has been accomplished. The grievous sin that brought upon generations the punishment incurred, perhaps, by *one*, has paid its last instalment—justice is satisfied—and the avenging hand is withdrawn.

Dear Stukely, pardon the unhappy wretch who united you to her fate. I know not at this moment what, in addition to my own crimes, I have to answer for on your account. I am ignorant of your affairs. They tell me you were forced away by the same hand that placed me here. Oh! it was a benevolent hand that did as much for both of us—that checked you in your career of error, and lightened the guilty burden of one who has already too much to cast before the throne of her offended Maker. "Could it have been his father?" I often ask myself. Oh yes! it must have been—who else? And you are now restored to his arms—he has forgiven you, and you are happy. You will return to Cambridge, prosecute your interrupted studies, and assume that respectable position amongst men to which your acquirements and your warm and honourable spirit so well entitle you. Ah!

would that I could be assured of all this, and that my ears might take in the welcome sounds before they close for ever on the world. But, in the meanwhile, I will believe it, and seek to pacify the murmurs of a never silent conscience. I have done you great wrong. It may be irreparable, although I trust not—fervently, fervently. If I can make you no proportionate amends, such as I can I will. You shall be told my miserable history—you shall read it, and then not curse the source and author of your woes. It is a testament due to the living. Read it, dear Stukely, and forgive the dying Emma. Read it *for your sister's sake*, if you have one that looks to you for protection and support.

I was born in the winter of the year 1780, and my birthplace was a lovely spot in one of the midland counties. My father was a clergyman of the established church; his name Harrington. I need scarcely tell you that the name Fitzjones was assumed at a later period of life, when my own conduct suggested the propriety of adopting it—not in order to keep disgrace from our family name, but to save it from an addition to the infamy that was attached to it wheresoever it was known. My father had lost his parents at an early age, but he was left, with a handsome fortune, to the care of his uncle—himself a man of influence and of great wealth. Fortunately for the children of the previous holders of my father's lands, the property had been entailed, and so far in bulk secu-

red from the desperately mad extravagance that attends so constantly on drunkenness. My father, on the other hand, when he became of age, obtained absolute possession. How he used his privilege you will hear. At the age of twenty-three, my father quitted the university and returned to the roof of his ancestors, and shortly afterwards his uncle procured for him, by purchase, a benefice in his native parish. A man less suited to his profession, less endowed with the qualities of heart and mind that are essential to a just performance of its duties, never, in a fit of recklessness or bravado, thrust himself into the sacred office. But let me do him justice. Thrust himself he did not. I have heard that before he went to the university he remonstrated with his uncle against being forced into *a trade*, as he termed it, in which he took no interest, and for which he had no taste. His fortune he considered ample for his desires, and study or reading of any kind was irksome and annoying. His guardian, however, was a man who did not well brook contradiction. He was a rude, severe, and vulgar man. It was his boast that he had in his youth swept the shop and cleaned the windows of the house, from which, in the prime of his manhood, he had retired with a hundred thousand pounds. He had resolved to have my father educated for the church. "There had never been," he said, "a bishop in the family; with money, he knew, any thing might be done in England, and he had made up his mind to see him on the bench." He

left my father to choose between compliance with his wishes and the prospect of a noble inheritance, and non-compliance without a farthing. My father at length capitulated on terms. He undertook to become a parson on three conditions. In the first place, he was to enter the university as a fellow-commoner; secondly, it was not to be expected that he should read; and lastly, his uncle was to provide him with a handsome living, and take all trouble off his hands. Under such happy auspices he proceeded to the seat of learning, subscribed implicitly to the Thirty-nine Articles, and entered upon a life of riot and debauchery which ended only with his own career. How he underwent the necessary ordeal of an examination you may understand. I have heard him many times boasting of his success, and vowing that, during a period of three years, he had only read as many books in twice as many days. He took his degree—he was ordained—he became a parish priest. Two years after his ordination, he met with my mother—a delicate and lovely girl, the daughter of a farmer in the neighbourhood, and a man of great worth and respectability. A hundred tongues have spoken to me of the integrity and honour of my maternal grandfather. He had a warm and capacious heart. I knew him only in the evening of his life, when his hair and eyebrows were white with venerable age, and his features gave notice of the presence and passing away of another generation. But I knew him at a time when his mind

was still vigorous and full of bright thoughts. As a man whose days were numbered and whose grave was making, he was subdued, serious, resigned, and holy. As one still amongst mankind, and in the bosom of those he loved, he was active in doing good, affectionately tender, joyful, and ever anxious to infuse into his advanced nature the feelings and the interests of the young about him. Oh, memory! sweetest companion when you wing us back to the bright spots which peace and virtue have consecrated and kept pure! I am once again with the good old man, walking in the green fields, and beneath the golden sun. I hear his cheerful voice bidding my little brother be playful and merry, to strengthen his limbs, and invigorate his mind; to be good to his mother and faithful to his Maker, for the time of learning was short, and the days of trial and of labour protracted and long. I feel his warm kiss and warmer tear as he pressed us children to his fond, aged bosom, and wept "that he should leave the lambs amongst wolves, and be cold and dead in the earth, unable to counsel or to help them." It would have been but common charity had the old man been allowed to go to sleep in the course of nature. His was more than an everyday claim to such a privilege. The curse that is the heirloom of our house, was at work when my poor grandfather died of a broken heart. My father saw my mother, and the impression made upon him at their first interview, by her innocence and beauty, decided her future

fate. He was madly in love with her, and in spite of the strong representations of his uncle, who had already provided a wife for him after his own taste, within a month he asked her in marriage. My dear mother—all weakness, love, and duty then, as she was ever—obedient to the will of her father, accepted him as a suitor, and gave her hand and her heart wholly to a man who never learned their value. Stukely, this heart has been distressed and wrung—you know it—when I have called to mind that mother's wrongs. I mourn no longer. I go to join her where she is at peace. Angels, who love the patient and the suffering, protect a kindred spirit, and cherish it in heaven. She was a stranger amongst men! She consented to become his wife. His uncle disinherited him for the act, and the nephew never afterwards pardoned my mother for the crime.

My father's character gradually developed itself after this crisis in his life. Forsaken by his uncle, it was expected that he would retire from an occupation that had never been pleasing to him, and which had been followed only in consequence of the understanding already referred to. But he did no such thing. He held his incumbency, and discharged its obligations. Thrown upon his own resources, he was not slow to avail himself to the full extent of the help they could afford him. For a few years he persevered in a line of conduct that won for him the good-will and regard of the world, and so effectually, that they

were withdrawn with pain and reluctance at a later period, when his flagrant and undisguised behaviour rendered him unworthy of either. He was attentive to the poor, and mixed with the powerful and the rich in his cure. Mildness and humanity characterized his demeanour with the former; servility and cringing his intercourse with the latter. These were the out-door sacrifices imperiously demanded from his selfishness; home and its devoted victims paid the penalty in bearing tyranny and persecution.

A year after her marriage, my mother brought into the world my brother Frederick. I was born two years later. We were their only offspring. I was five years old when I became aware, for the first time, that man and wife, though linked together by the strongest chains, may, at the same time, be wholly distinct and separate from each other. It was not without alarm, even at this tender age, that I felt the burning tears of my mother falling upon my neck; nor, whilst she hung over me, her voice half-stifled, murmuring in distress my father's name, did her accents fall upon my infant year in vain. Her maternal heart was overflowing with love for *me*. She could not tell how much she loved dear Frederick and myself, and my little heart beat deeply for them both. I could not bear to see her cry. No loss in my little but important world, could give me half the pain that I experienced when I beheld the habitual sorrow of my mother.

The habit which I have already mentioned, as belonging by a cruel necessity to our family, developed itself in my father's case in very early youth. It was encouraged and perfected at the university. This vice added strength and bitterness to every bad quality that he possessed. Cruel and overbearing at other times, when under the influence of strong drink he became a furious madman. Surprising as it may seem, this man, upon whose head no day closed during which he had not treated my mother with violence and harshness that were intolerable as they were unparalleled, could, once beyond his own gates, adorn his lip with smiles, and assume a garb of Christian kindness and consideration. Open to the grossest flattery himself, he was a sycophant in the most extensive sense of the word; and by the poor and necessitous, whose affection and good word are ever to be gained at a price, and amongst whom he scattered indiscriminate alms in the terror of his conscience-stricken moments, he was spoken of as a man who was preparing for himself, by charity and good works, "an incorruptible crown of glory that fadeth not away."

My dear and patient mother—forbearing and patient under injury as she was herself tender and inoffensive—bore her wrongs but too meekly. Although worn out with grief, she never complained. At home we knew nothing beyond the tears, and sighs, and drooping countenance which were not to be hidden. Indis-

tinct were the ideas which these enabled me to form respecting the cause of all her affliction. Both my brother and myself were studiously kept at a distance from the rooms occupied by our parents, and our sleeping-room was far enough from theirs to prevent our hearing any thing that passed after they had retired to bed—alas, not to rest!

It was my mother's custom to come into our nursery every morning before breakfast, to read a portion of Holy Scripture, and afterwards to kneel with us in prayer. My father never accompanied her. As I grew up, I was struck on these occasions by the change which had taken place in her appearance during the night. She had evidently been robbed of sleep. Her eyes were red and swollen, her face wan and pale, her hand dry and feverish. For months these symptoms continued, and the poor victim became weaker and weaker, more and more sorrowful.

The events of one morning are deeply engraven on my memory. Childhood and its joys ceased then. Knowledge came to me to perplex and grieve. I had reached my seventh year. My mother came to pray to her children as usual. Her Bible opened at the 5th chapter of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. She was very wretched, and she proceeded in her task with a thin weak voice. She came to the words, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess;" and my brother looked up to me, as her lips quivered and her pale hand trembled. She had not selected the lesson;

but one more appropriate she could scarcely have chosen. "*Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. . . . He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it.*" She had not spoken the words before, completely overcome by the violence and rapidity of her feelings, she burst into a flood of tears. The Bible dropped. She buried her face in her hands, and then passionately sobbed and wept, as if her heart were falling to pieces, and as I had never heard man, woman, or child sob and weep before. I was frantic, but little Frederick looked upon my poor mother in silence, and knit his brows, and clenched his infant fist.

My mother, however, soon recovered herself, and then, without looking at either of us, or uttering one word more, she left the room. Frederick ran after her; but when she perceived him, she quickened her steps. He was too nimble for her, and when she reached her own room, he was at her side, and they entered it together. He was flushed, and looked wildly at her. For a moment, he seemed as if he knew not what to do or say. At last he threw himself into his mother's arms, and cried—

"You hate me, mother! You hate me, I know you do!"

"What do you mean, Frederick?" she asked.

"Why," said he, "you are ill, and are in great

suffering, and you keep it to yourself, and never speak to me about it."

"I am quite well in health, Frederick," she said, endeavouring to compose herself, and to satisfy him.

"Oh no, you are not!" he answered; "if you are, why do you cry so? You make me wretched, you do. It will kill me soon, and you will be sorry for it then."

"For what?" asked my mother. "Tell me, dearest heart, what shall I do to make you happy?"

"Let me know what father says to you," he replied quickly, and in a different tone. "I am sure you don't love me, or you would have told me before. Why don't you let me take your part?"

"Frederick," said my mother, "you know I love you dearly; and that much of my little share of happiness on earth depends upon you, my sweet boy. I am sure of your affection too, for you have ever been most dutiful. You have never once disobeyed your mother. Ask me no questions, dearest, which I cannot answer. I shall soon be well again. I am only weak. You have always attended without a murmur to your mother's bidding. You will do so now. Return to the nursery, and take no notice of what has happened. I have behaved very ill at prayers. It shall not occur again. Go, dear boy."

Frederick would have made some reply, but my mother held up her finger with an air of kind remon-

strance, and he said nothing. He departed without another syllable. I encountered him on the stairs, where, taking me by the hand, and urging me forward, he exclaimed, in a tone of vexation and suppressed anger, "Come, Emma, mamma doesn't care for us. If she is ill again, I sha'n't mind it at all. It is nothing to me." And a tear started to his eye, and his little lip quivered, giving the lie to every word he spoke.

The day passed on, and nothing more was heard of this occurrence. About eleven o'clock at night I was frightened out of a deep sleep by a tapping at the door of my bedroom. I was terribly alarmed, and the more so in consequence of the previous disturbance at prayers, which had furnished me with an endless series of distressing dreams. My name was called in a low, sharp whisper, and I crept from my nurse's side to listen at the keyhole. I accomplished this without waking her, and then I summoned courage to ask the name of the intruder.

The voice of Frederick answered me, still whispering.

"It is Fred," said he; "come with me, Emma. I have found it all out."

"Found what out, dear?" I answered.

"About father and mother. Don't wait, but open the door quietly, and come as you are. You mustn't wait to dress yourself; if you do, we shall be too late."

I opened the door noiselessly, and discovered my brother in his night-dress, holding in his hand a rush-light, secured in a wire gauze shade.

"What is it all about, Frederick?" I enquired anxiously.

"He is killing mother, I am sure," he replied. "I have listened at the door for the last hour, and you can't think how he is talking, and she is crying, just as she did this morning. Don't you be a coward," he added, taking my trembling hand; "but come with me, and just whisper as I do." He led me on tiptoe towards the sleeping apartment of our parents. As he approached it, he walked more carefully, and at last he stopped.

"Hush!" said he; "There—do you hear?"

"No!" I answered, "I hear nothing."

"Well, wait a moment. There again."

"No, Frederick," I said, "it is nothing at all. I shall go back again."

"You are deaf, Emma," he exclaimed hastily, and in anger; and he applied his ear again to the door. "Now," said he, "don't speak a word. I hear him. He has called her some name, and she is crying quite loud."

He drew me close to his side. We held our breath, and listened for a time with strained attention. A burst of anguish from the lips of my poor mother, and then long and piteous sobbing succeeding it, as thunder does the flash, startled me, and sent me clinging into my brother's arms.

"Yes, that's it!" he said, "I heard it before for an hour together. Hush! listen!" My mother was

weeping amain, loud and unrestrained, and the words that struggled through her tears reached easily our ears.

"For Heaven's sake, Harrington," she exclaimed, "think of the children! What will become of them? You are killing me. Robbed night after night of my natural rest, treated as I am by you through every hour of my existence, I look for nothing else than speedy death. It could not come too soon, but for the dear children. What will become of them when I am sacrificed?"

"Give me the brandy, wretch!" said my father, in a thick gruff voice.

"No more to-night, Harrington," she answered, "you can scarcely stand now. Pray, get to bed. For the last four nights I have not taken off my clothes; I am sinking with fatigue: do show me a little mercy."

"Mercy, you infernal ——!"

"What does that mean?" asked Frederick sharply, and pinching my arm with excessive agitation.

"I don't know," I answered, weeping, and crushing my tears at the same time; "but let us go to bed again—I am afraid to stay."

"No, I sha'n't go," said Frederick; "you may if you please. I shall wait here. Go: I shall not come for you again."

"Oh, Frederick, I couldn't leave you for the world! What shall we do?"

"Keep quiet," said my brother, "and hear all we can."

"Why the d—l, woman, am I kept here?" roared my father, mad with liquor. "Will you give me brandy, or shall we set fire to the house again?"

"Oh, for the love of Heaven, Harrington, do not repeat that trick! In another instant, and we should have been burned to death."

"Burn!" was the husband's reply: "it would have been a good day's work for me if you had burned, roasted, and rotted, before I ever met with you. Haven't you been the cause of my ruin?"

"You are raving."

"I am neither mad nor drunk. If you haven't ruined me, tell me what has become of my uncle's property?"

"This is the old story, Harrington. You tell me of this hour after hour, as if I could have prevented what has passed, or repair it now. Am I to be always blamed for the harshness of your own relative? I warned you of your risk, and wished you to consider well the step"——

"Oh, none of your cant here! It sickens me to hear you. Where is the brandy, I say?"

"I have locked it away. You have had more than enough to-night. This hand, Harrington, shall never do you so much wrong as to offer you the burning poison whilst you are in your present helpless situation."

"Give me the key, I say!" cried my father, kicking the chair from under him, as we supposed, for we heard it fall with violence, and himself stamping and reeling on the floor. There was a short scuffle and a moment's silence, then a shriek from my mother, and a guttural noise proceeding, it might be from strangulation.

"Oh, Fred, Fred!" I exclaimed, giving free egress to my gushing tears, "what is that—what has happened? Mother is dying."

Frederick made me no answer. The bedroom door was not locked. He opened it with violence, and entered the apartment. I followed him, crying aloud, and shaking from head to foot with terror. It was a melancholy scene. My mother sat at the end of the bed, white as its draperies, sighing convulsively and wringing her hands. My father was before a raging fire, whose flaming coal was piled high into the aperture of the chimney. My mother was attired as in the daytime, but her head was uncovered. The cap which had adorned it was consuming in the fire, having been torn from her and cast there by my father, who now contemplated its destruction with the drunken chuckle of an intoxicated fiend. My mother, as soon as she perceived us, and could recover from astonishment, rushed eagerly towards us, and placed herself between us and my father.

"Oh, my poor, dear children!" she exclaimed at the same moment.

"What do they want here?" bellowed my father, staring wildly first at my brother and then at me.

"Go to bed, dear Frederick," said my mother, imploringly, to the little child.

"I sha'n't," he answered, his pretty cheeks swelling with rage and unnatural excitement. "I sha'n't go, if you don't go with me, mother."

"What!" exclaimed the drunken man, rising with difficulty from his chair, and preparing himself evidently for violence.

"Oh go, go, dear!" cried my mother, clasping her hands, and looking most entreatingly on Frederick. "Go, before he murders you!"

"What do you mean by that, wretch?" said he, seizing her by the wrist.

His hand was scarcely on her arm before my brother flew at the aggressor, like a young eagle on its prey. My father seized him by the throat—my mother screamed, and ran between them. I called aloud to all, but could not move for dread and apprehension. It was an awful sight—father and child struggling together in active enmity, and with evil passion, hot and unbound as it exists in devils. Search through the calendar of crime—recall the sights that pall and sicken you, that send through every fibre of offended nature the horrible chill of loathing—and confess that the hand of the child, lifted against the author and parent of its life, surpasses all in fearful ugliness and depravity. Nature thus deformed I had never seen

before. I shudder and grow cold as I realize the monstrous picture. I know not how the impious contest ended. Frederick was torn from the iron grasp of his father, and carried almost insensible to his own room. He had fainted, either from excessive exertion, or from the punishment he had received; for my father had not dealt lightly with him. I remember that my mother accompanied Frederick to his bed, and sobbed piteously over him; and I recollect well that the last glimpse I had of my father, as I quitted his presence, was when he drew his chair savagely to the fire, and sat there grinning at the goodly work he had performed. Higher and higher he built his mountain of coal, and more fearful grew the rampant flames. I can tell you little more. I awoke on the following morning with every nerve in my weak body loosened and unstrung. My limbs had burst the bonds that held them in unity and subjection, and anarchy prevailed throughout my frame. My eyes rolled ceaselessly; my tongue leapt from my mouth, and, like an idiot's, moved along my lips: arms, hands, and feet—every feature, and every muscle, were at liberty; and, whilst the freedom lasted, used it wildly. The fright of the previous evening had fallen upon my system with a whelming shock, and the restless dance of Saint Vitus was upon me.

This is the first tragic scene that I can remember—would it were the last!—of a home made dismal and desolate by the withering presence of one unholy vice.

When my calamity was removed, and I recovered from my illness, I learned that my brother was at a boarding-school, and many miles away. My mother had placed him there without the knowledge of my father; and, notwithstanding the urgent and repeated requests of the latter, she would not communicate to him the place of his residence. To punish her, as he expressed it, for her persevering obstinacy, in a moment of partial intoxication, and for a hundredth part of its value, he disposed of a considerable portion of his inheritance, giving her to understand, at the same time, that if this act did not bring her to obedience, he would try what could be done by selling the remainder. It is hardly necessary for me to say that the produce of this sale replenished the cellars of the drunkard, and filled them to the very roof with the deadly elixir.

It was impossible for my father to persist in his vicious course without attracting the notice, and bringing upon himself the open remarks, of men. I have already told you, that for a few years he commended himself to the world by his behaviour, and secured the favour and good-will of his parishioners, by flattering the rich, and *acting* offices of kindness on behalf of the poor. But it became daily less and less easy for him to hide, beneath the hypocrite's cloak, the corroding inroads of his master passion. In spite of the folds, the ulcer was there apparent. Slight improprieties of conduct were at first revealed, but to these were added, at a later period, faults of a deeper dye. He had been

found inebriated and insensible in the broad day. He had spoken ribaldry and unmeaning jargon at the bedside of a dying woman, to whom he had been called to administer the last sacrament. He had reeled to his pulpit, and had mounted it with the aid of his servant; but, blindly intoxicated, and unable to perform his duties, he had been afterwards carried from it and conveyed to his home. These were facts which courted observation, and were passed from mouth to mouth. The parishioners were scandalized, and the minister was remonstrated with. He listened to the rebuke; and then, it is said, he wept—so acutely did he appear to feel the cruel and unexpected imputation. He denied, with vehemence, the charge so eagerly preferred against him by his enemies. He confessed, with sorrow, that he was a poor afflicted man, labouring under a malady that brought upon him deep mental suffering, bitter bodily pain; but he defied the harshest of them all to prove a greater sin against him. The impression, however, was not to be taken from the minds of his accusers; but for the present they urged no more. It was not long after this interview that a party in the neighbourhood became known by the name of the "minister's men." It consisted principally of the humblest individuals in the parish, and they constituted themselves the champions and supporters of my father's cause. They waged war against any who hinted at his unhappy failing, and demanded on all sides sympathy for his bodily infir-

mities. Borne upon the voices of these men, and placing, as he could with a motive strong enough to incite him, a moderate restraint upon his passion, he contrived for a short period to stem the tide of opposition, which, having once turned, had never ceased to roll against him. But the demands of the tempter were not to be suppressed, however they might be resisted or dallied with for a season. Once more, and very soon, he yielded undisguisedly to the engrossing lust—fresh delinquencies arose—sacrilege was repeated again and again—murmurs grew to complaints —complaints to accusations, and at length my father ceased to be the incumbent of his native parish. The immediate cause of his retirement was an act of brutality perpetrated against my unfortunate mother. He had, on this occasion, treated her with more than his ordinary severity. He struck her in the most cowardly and unprovoked manner. A maid-servant had witnessed the action, and her indignation was aroused. She threatened and upbraided him, and vowed that she would publish his conduct wheresoever he was known. Upon the following morning she received her dismissal. Before evening, the scene was circumstantially narrated to every creature in the parish. My mother's wrongs were—if it were possible—exaggerated; her uncomplaining nature and her meekness —no representation could heighten *them*—discussed and pitied. A few members of the congregation who had signalized themselves throughout my father's

career by their acknowledged hostility, now visited their pastor, and represented to him the propriety of an immediate resignation of his cure. They carried with them a written statement of his proceedings during the past twelvemonth, which they gave him to understand would be forwarded without delay to the bishop of the diocese, should he refuse to comply with their command, or hesitate one moment in his decision. "It was in consideration of his wife alone," they added, "that they had prevailed upon themselves to act so leniently towards a man who had forfeited every claim upon their mercy and regard." My father was abashed and cowed, and gladly accepted release on any terms. He had never been a man of courage. What man of courage every yet, by systematic cruelty, crushed and destroyed the fragile flower that clung about him for support? What man of courage ever stained his manhood by inflicting blows upon a weak and unoffending woman? It is the mongrel cur, and not the lion, that trembles whilst it snarls. Dissipation had given to his hands the native motion of the heart. Those shook from intemperance, as this from natural fear. He stood before his fellow-men, the meanest, the most debased and cowardly of his sex. Be sure he loved not my mother the better for the influence of her good name, and for the mitigation of punishment that name had silently effected. They departed in company—she, not sorry to forsake an abode painfully associated with her history—he, poor shallow reasoner!

regarding his wife as the cause of his misfortunes ; and with his hatred against the miserable creature increased a hundred-fold. The living was sold. With half the proceeds he purchased a three years' interest in a benefice, the property of a youth, who, yet a minor, was prosecuting his studies in the University of Oxford. The other half supplied him with wine, his only food—with fresh fuel for the raging passion which had not yet consumed him. It was his boast that he would live long enough to spend every farthing that he possessed. That he should die leaving the means of subsistence to his wife and children, came not within the range of possibility. He had resolved that it should be otherwise. To Kent we now journeyed, sad pilgrims! My brother was still at school. He had not been permitted to return home since he quitted its roof. My mother was terrified at the thought of another meeting between him and his father. The latter, in every fit of drunkenness, swore vengeance against "the villain who had attacked him;" and distressed to agony my poor mother with a cold-blooded description of the modes he would employ to torture and to kill him, when he should fall again into his power. Frederick had often written from school, imploring my mother to receive him at home for her protection; she would not listen to the request, but conjured him, with every expression she could make use of, to remain contentedly where he was, and not to add to the wretchedness of her condition. I have

a packet of her letters now before me. Scarcely a day passed that did not find her writing to her son. She lived in constant dread of beholding him. To have seen him cross the threshold, I do believe would have been fatal to her. She was convinced that my father had resolved upon his death, and an habitual presentiment satisfied her, that she should live to see the horrible deed committed. I take up a letter at random. Read the earnest entreaty of the mother to the banished child —"Dearest, dearest Frederick, my own sweet boy! May I be quite certain that you will spend the coming vacation at your school? What books, what things may I send to you for your instruction and amusement? Time will pass very quickly with your kind Mr Percival; and the school days will so soon come round again, and you will be with your old companions, and in their society forget the trials to which you are unfortunately subjected. Oh! it is a sweet time of the year! How I envy you—the gambols up and down hill, and your pretty walks and daily pleasures! And you are so well, too! What a happiness this is to me. How I long to have you with me—you know I do, and a day will come when we shall feel blessed with one another! But it must not be now. I feel so very easy when I am assured of your absence —it is a very hard thing to say, and I could not say it, dear Frederick, to any boy except yourself; but you are so good and kind to your mother, and would not give her pain for all the world. If you should

come to us, your father would be more unkind than he has ever been, and he remembers well the last night that you passed with him. He speaks of it often, and with much sharpness and severity. I can bear all that I have now to suffer without repining, as long as I am sure that you are safe. Think how comforting it is to make your mother happy in her mind, and then I am sure you will cheerfully comply with all she wishes." Frederick reiterated his importunities; but he doated on his mother, and he ceased to disturb her when he found his solicitations grieved and afflicted her. It was shortly after our arrival at the new parsonage that we contrived to receive Frederick on a visit of a few days. Business connected with the living had carried my father to London for a short time. It was the first interval of quiet that we had known for years. The house became on a sudden a peaceful and a sweet abode—a receptacle for angels. You cannot conceive, it is hardly possible to believe, that an alteration so sudden and so perfect could have taken place. The change in my own spirit was marvellous. I felt as if I had been imprisoned from infancy, fettered for ages in a dreary dungeon; and that for the first moment in my life I walked about erect, in freedom and in light. My very features seemed to relax in the improved reviving atmosphere. My brow became unknit—my eye dilated and sparkled with awakened animation. I tripped from room to room, my unembarrassed foot scarcely conscious of the ground. In every nook was

peace—over the entire dwelling was expanded the pacific and protecting wing of a heavenly and pure intelligence. All was intense tranquillity. Yes, it is true, one human being, darkening with his pernicious shadow a bright and spotless scene, makes paradise a pandemonium. Timid as the fawn are the gentle deities of the domestic hearth—a harsh word scares them, and makes a palace desolate. My mother and I walked from the village in which we dwelt to meet my brother at the market town through which the coach passed, distant some four miles from our home. It was a land of enchantment that we traversed—or the earth had reassumed its pristine innocence and glory. It was so very fair! Hand in hand we went along—the smile crept from my mother's heart and ventured to her cheek. My grateful soul bounded with delight to give the stranger welcome—my tongue grew voluble—my spirit was drowned in inundating mirth. It was a moment to have died. Eagerly I looked through the long street of the town for the arrival of the stage, but more eagerly my mother. Active and nimble were my eyes and feet—how much more hers? It was not long before we caught sight of his handsome face straining from the coach-window, at whose door we stood impatiently. He had grown very tall. For years I had not seen him. He had reached his sixteenth year, but he looked four years older. His features were noble and expressive. The character of the Spaniard was impressed upon them rather than

that of the Englishman. His glossy jet-black hair hung loosely to his shoulders. His complexion was dark; his eye black, sharp and penetrating. An aquiline nose gave to that eye a fiery keenness like unto the eagle's, and the glare was not always easy to endure. When he took his mother by the hand, and kissed her passionately in the public road, a crimson flush mounting to his eyes expressed the stroke that her sad and altered countenance had immediately inflicted on him; and, in truth, she was paler than ever, with the confluence of many feelings battling in her bosom. We returned to the parsonage together. He walked between us; one hand clasped lovingly my mother's—the other was around my waist. How much sorrow and trouble did I forget in the sweet consciousness of a brother's love!—a brother newly found, noble in form as he was affectionate and tender in disposition. How proud I was to be his sister! and how I listened to every word he uttered with the reverence and belief due to superior wisdom and intelligence! I asked him a hundred questions touching his pleasures and pursuits—causing interrogatory to tread upon the heel of answer, until the latter halted, hopeless to keep pace. The cares and the anxieties of adolescence melt before one ray of passing sunlight—not so the deep corroding woes of maturer life. With my brother I was gay and jocund, as though my couch from infancy had been a bed of roses—had never been disturbed by hard and prickly thorns. My dear mother wept as she

proceeded, for the present happy moment only reminded her of the joy that she had lost. Frederick at first, all animation and excitement, was fluent and cheerful in his talk; but he watched his mother till her blanched cheek and tearful eye silenced his tongue, and carried heaviness to his heart. We arrived at our residence, and then my mother, remarking the depression of Frederick, assumed a cheerfulness that lacked serenity enough to cheat the shallowest observer. She smiled and spoke to him of his master, Mr Percival, and enquired whether the quaint boy, of whom he used to send in his long letters such humorous accounts, still lived, and was still his chosen playmate. "You described him so cleverly, Frederick," said my mother, "I hope you are still good friends."

"How long is this to last, mother?" he said, speaking in return to her question, though not replying to it.

"What, child?" she asked.

"Your miserable way of life. It is shocking to behold you. Are you never to be released from your terrible situation? He will murder you."

My mother made no answer.

"I shall not return to school until something is done for your relief. The father of one of my schoolfellows is a lawyer, and he tells me that the law will help you."

My mother shook her head.

"Ah, but I know better!" he replied; "if for our

sakes, if for Emma and me, you will have courage to state your grievances, they will not suffer you to be persecuted."

"The grave, Frederick, the grave," she said seriously, "is the only friend that can interpose between me and your father. It is in vain that I look nearer for help. The hand of the law is dull and sluggish when a weak woman would raise it on her behalf. Man is jealous of the rights of man. It is his right to use us as he pleases. He believes it is. We are not ignorant of the fact when we resign our liberty, and throw ourselves upon his mercy. I have been unfortunate. It is not so with all."

"I will confront him," said Frederick passionately, "and compel the tyrant to be merciful. It is my duty, and I will do it."

"No, you will not, Frederick," answered my mother calmly; "you will not forget the terms upon which this interview takes place—you will not forfeit your word—you will not break your mother's heart. All this you will do—and more than I dare think of, if you act so rashly. You do not require me to repeat now what I have said to you before a hundred times. You must not—*shall not* see your father. There is nothing to be done for me. I must bear the inevitable yoke. Heaven will give me strength; for I have prayed, and found it. There is one thing I cannot bear—it is the disobedience of my boy. Your dutiful affection has sustained me in the darkest hours of life.

I have nothing to live for when that is taken from me."

It was with appeals of this nature that my mother checked every attempt on the part of my brother to remain at home until the return of his father. He implored her to grant him permission so to do. He promised sacredly that he would not be violent or upbraid his parent—that he would reason calmly with him—that he would speak respectfully and like a son —that he would be satisfied to secure for her an amicable separation, and peace for the future, without irritating him with references to the past. It was in vain. No eloquence could conquer her—no entreaty move her. She dreaded, with a horror that was not to be suppressed, an interview between father and son; and no pleading could alter her steadfast resolution to prevent it. Frederick remained four days with us. After the first evening he made no mention of his father. My mother put an end to his requests by telling him that it grieved and distressed her when he spoke of her wrongs, and that she should be much happier if he reverted to them no more. He was silent, and almost sullen from that time. Twenty little artifices did my mother play to rouse him to good-humour, and to satisfy him that she had spoken all in love, and not in anger. But her success was little. He sat at home from morning to night, moody and inactive, reading perhaps for half an hour—then holding the book upon his knee for as long a time—

his eyes bent towards the ground—and his lips pressed hard and close together. When we had walked homeward after our first greeting, he promised me sweet country-walks and pastime on the road such as I had never heard of. He had learned botany, and he could tell me all the secrets of the little flowers, which were revealed but to a chosen few who loved to gossip with them in their lowly homes. All this he had forgotten. Air and exercise displeased him, and he scarcely passed the threshold until he took his melancholy leave of it, and journeyed back to school. I accompanied him to the market-town, and saw him safely on the coach.

"Emma," he said at parting, "mother must take her own course. I have obeyed her; I have not spoken to her again of father and his treatment, and I never will if I live a hundred years. In twelve months I am to leave school and to go abroad. I am glad of it; I wish to be away; I am quite satisfied now of one thing—mother loves father after all, and she cannot bear the thought of leaving him."

"Indeed you are mistaken, Frederick," I replied. "I know her better than you do. It is for us that she suffers every thing, and for your sake alone that she keeps you from that wicked man."

"Well, I don't see it," he said recklessly; "and I don't care. Good-by, Emma. I wish I was dead, for I am tired of my life."

"Don't talk so, Frederick," I answered. "What

shall I do if mother is taken from us? I couldn't live with *him* an hour. I shall be thrown on the world."

"No, no, Emma—not whilst I live. Don't mind what I say when I am irritated. I am very irritable. You shall find me an affectionate brother. I shall write to you directly I get to school, and oftener than I have done of late."

"Oh, and do write to mother too, Frederick; it will make her so happy! She thinks that you have gone away angry with her."

"Give her that kiss, Emma, and tell her it is no such thing. And take that for yourself. Here comes the coach—God bless you, dear!—good-by." So he departed.

On the evening of the same day, my father returned to the parsonage. His affairs had been arranged in London sooner than he anticipated. Gloom pervaded once more the habitation; but we thanked Heaven that the safety of Frederick was provided for. It would be tedious and offensive to prosecute in detail the narrative of this wretched man. The history of one day in the career of the drunkard, is the history of his life. A circumstance at this period it is necessary, however, to notice. Fretted and agitated by the violence of his demeanour on one occasion, I was unable to repress my swelling anger; and I spoke to him, in the bitterness of my heart, as I had never ventured to address him in my life before. My words astounded

him for the moment; and they were so far useful to my mother, for they deprived her of his undivided abuse. He glared sottishly at me for an instant, and then, raving at the top of his voice, vowed he hated me as he had never hated any earthly creature, and that he should live to behold me dropping a corpse before his very feet. This prophecy did not frighten me. It was his hourly amusement to predict some terrible calamity, which would involve his wife and children in irreparable ruin. To-day he would tell my mother that he had dreamed her boy had been attacked and murdered. To-morrow he would fix a time when she was destined to follow her daughter to the grave; and the next day, with an unmeaning look of mystery, he would tell her to beware of him in such a month, for he had an awful mission to perform, and must fulfill it. Every new denouncement carried terror to my brother's breast; one after another burst like a bubble in the air, but the latest shook her fragile frame as powerfully as the first. This the inhuman man well knew, and knowing it pursued the system, gloating at his success. I laughed at his prediction; but from that well-remembered evening he marked me for his victim. He could not suffer me in his sight, nor did he permit me to be out of it. The foulest epithets were associated with my name. Expressions which I had never heard, and whose signification I did not understand, and on enquiry learned only to become more ignorant and perplexed,

were, without provocation, heaped upon me; oath after oath was fulminated on my head; and I have stood trembling and aghast, listening to my father, wondering why the lightning that destroyed the fruitful and the goodly tree, did not strike dead the *man* that mocked his Maker, sported with his holy name, and laughed to scorn his solemn precepts and commandments. Fresh trouble came upon my mother in consequence of the new direction of my father's hatred. Whilst she had been the only object of his violence and savage humour, the blows had fallen silently upon her, and the anguish they elicited had been borne without a murmur. You might read her history in the lines that sorrow, in spite of her, had traced upon her pallid face—and but for these, the patient martyr might have passed into her grave unsuspected of a pang. It was not so when her child was doomed to share her punishment. She saw me pining beneath the blight of an unnatural malignity. She beheld precocious hatred, impious passion, swelling my unripe cheek, staining my ill-instructed tongue; and nature constrained from the *mother* the wailings that had been overpowered and stifled in the wife. She wept, she remonstrated, she begged, she upbraided; but the new instrument of torture worked well, too well for the employer to surrender it so easily. Night after night passed in loud distracting brawls. It had become impossible to escape from persecution. Until now I had been spared the *sight* of his ferocious

violence. I had heard all, but seen little. My mother took care to banish me from the scene of her misery; but not the less on that account did I pass the long and weary hours of the night at her chamber-door, shaking with fear, and expecting every moment to hear her dying accents. Never did I forsake my guard until stupefaction had wrought upon the intoxicated man, and all was silence in the house—all but the victim's heavy sighs, or it might be, her prayers, choked by her hot, heart-rending tears. I had found it impossible to sleep until I could carry to my bed the assurance that murder had not been committed. I had made the attempt many times; but before my head was on the pillow, a slight noise, real or imaginary, brought me to my feet again, and sent me tremulous and apprehensive to their bedroom. For countless nights I stood before the door, a lone and wakeful sentinel. The early summer sun has found me on my watch; the winter's howling wind and dropping snow have been my long and cheerless visitants. I was glad of my privilege and grateful to enjoy it, whilst she was ignorant of my occupation. I do not think I could have borne the sight of half her sufferings. I endured to hear them, deeming my proximity a guarantee for her safety and defence. This advantage was soon denied me. He followed me whithersoever I went. He lighted a fire in my bedroom, quaffed his liquor there, and, between the draughts, railed and raged at me, until the same expressions, repeated and repeated, fretted the mind

almost to madness. If I ran from him, he pursued me. If I stood still and silent, he goaded till I answered. If I spoke, he stormed and foamed until I held my peace. The persecution was intolerable. I sank beneath it, and my poor mother, in her agony, looked around to find for her second-born a second place of refuge. In the meanwhile my father still performed the duties of his office. Flagrant as were his proceedings, they were not known to their full extent beyond his own house. Few persons in the straggling parish in which we were located, visited us. Whispers could not fail to be abroad, but they were indistinct, and the people were not curious. Besides, my father was a *generous* man—generous as the word is understood in the gross vocabulary of the world. Hodge, the ploughman, "had never seen the parson's equal. Wet or dry, if ever he met Mr Harrington, he was as friendly as could be, and nothing short of a quart had he ever offered him." There was not a labourer who had not profited by such questionable charity, and who was not ready, by day and by night, to do the clergyman good service. The innkeepers were satisfied that "the parish had got just the man it wanted, and that the Church would never be in danger whilst it had such clergymen for props;" and the most censorious in the parish could only say, "that Mr Harrington was no enemy to his bottle, and was, in other respects, a very jolly parson." Now and then a tale would find its way from the parsonage

into the village, but so strangely altered as to be no longer recognised by the subjects of it; and, at such times, my mother fared but poorly in the estimate of the parishioners. "She was to blame for answering my father; he was warm-tempered, but *very good at heart;* he had much to vex and worry him—a sullen daughter at home, and a wild scapegrace son exiled from the house. His wife should think of this, and not cross him when he was ill at ease." These were a few of the remarks appended to each story, as accident or my father's tongue—for he was cunning as well as vicious, and could find advantage in being the bearer of his own disgrace—carried it from our dwelling through the village. To all this, it must be added, that, although he was never actually sober, it could not be averred that he was always inebriated. During the earlier hours of the day he was thoroughly master of himself, and with his grave and serious aspect might have challenged your closest scrutiny. His constitution was naturally very strong, and his system did not yield without a struggle to the inroads of the poison. It had become necessary to his existence to gratify, in every hour of waking life, the morbid cravings of his appetite. With the earliest blush of day, a draught that would have been a dangerous stimulant to others, was swallowed to soothe and tranquillize his frame. Dram was added to dram with fearful frequency, but without any visible effect until late in the afternoon; but then he had already shut

himself up from the world, and the horrors of drunkenness were exhibited only to those of whom he had no fear, and who had no power to resist or avoid the cruelty that eternally accompanied it. Remembering how a neglect of his former duties, or rather a profanation of them, had caused his removal from his first cure, he took pains to discharge to the very letter the obligations of his calling. He never absented himself from the pulpit; he never approached it helpless from intemperance. The task did not call for much self-denial. Service was *performed* but one day in the week, and but once on that day. For visiting his flock, the majority of his congregation were boon companions, and he was a welcome guest at all times. I have said enough to account for my mother's isolated, pitiable condition, to explain the cold neglect that she experienced, and to move you with compassion for her undeserved and cruel fate. She found neither help nor consolation in man. She had not asked it. She turned her thoughts and aspirations heavenward. *There* they were fixed henceforward—there they were occupied, securing a resting-place for the bruised spirit that longed for its own bright, peaceful home.

Let me not forget to say, that, besides my mother and myself, there was another individual who had borne testimony to my father's mode of life. This was no other than his own clerk—old Adam, of whom you have heard me speak. He was upwards of seventy years of age when we first knew him—a rare old man,

primitive in his habits, simple as a child. He was devoted to the Church of England, to his parish, to the parish church, and to the church's minister. He honoured and revered them all. They were the most important things of life—the only things—life itself. A flaw in any one came not within the circumference of his belief. They were infallible all. He had never travelled further than five miles beyond the vestry-door. Bible and prayer-book were his only library; the school and little children, his choicest occupation and best friends. I loved him dearly, and looked upon him as the wisest and the best of men. My father considered him an idiot and a fool, unworthy of notice, and did not hesitate to act before him precisely as if no one had been present. Old Adam was a spectator during one of his wildest fits, and believed that the last judgment was approaching, and the world hastening to its close. The scene was repeated, and the old man hobbled away, flustered and confounded. For a third time it was his lot to witness his superior's degradation; and he stood before him, unable to move and to speak, silently weeping. It was with good Adam that my mother made her last effort to attach to herself a friend and comforter. He passed much of his time in the little churchyard, keeping it in trim, good order, and busy with the trees and flowers which he had planted and tended for some years around and about the last dwelling-place of his ever-respected friends. He had a sincere regard for his mistress, and he pitied

her distresses; but his veneration for the Church and her minister had been too great to allow one syllable of disrespect to escape him against the Reverend Mr Harrington. So it was when we accosted him in his usual haunt, and my mother spoke to him in confidence respecting her wrongs.

"I have long ceased, Adam," she said, "to think for myself; but I cannot be insensible to my poor girl's sufferings. I owe it to her to take some steps for our release.

"Oh, madam," he replied, "think of Mother Church —think of the scandal and the shame! I wouldn't have matters known to be made clerk of the cathedral itself. We should make wounds that we could never heal, if we were to preach for ever afterwards. People are so much more apt to find fault with what the clergymen does ill, than to follow what he says well. Folks who read little are very foolish; and if a cobbler is hanged for murder—as Anthony Potts was in the town yonder—they'll tell you that cobbling is a wicked trade, quite unnecessary, and ought to be abolished. So it is, madam, with a mender of souls. The cloth suffers more than the man. Be merciful, good lady, with Mother Church."

"Am I not justified in an appeal to the world? Does not my child demand it?"

"I must own," said Adam, "Mr Harrington *is* a little comical at times. But don't you think it is his way. He means nothing. Couldn't something be

done mildly, so as to keep the unfortunate business snug and quiet?"

"Quiet, Adam? Do you imagine that it is not the common topic of the village?—that it is not known to every creature in the place?"

"I am sure it isn't, madam," he replied, "for I have taken too much thought of that myself. I have silenced all complaints. I am a member of the Establishment, and Heaven forgive me if I have gone a little to the left in doing a member's duty! I have said all you could have wished me—even hinted—may I be pardoned for it—that he was delicate and weakly, and liable to attacks—that he drank very little for the stomach's sake, and, unfortunately, the least drop proved too much for him. I have said he was a man of troubles, and easily excited—and that the anxiety he felt for a rebel boy at school made him at times not conscious of his doings. The people have pitied him. You could not have shown more sorrow for him yourself than they have done—and only think what a load of reproach the Church has escaped, to say nothing of her ministering servants!"

"You have been much mistaken, Adam," sighed my mother.

"I have endeavoured not to mistake my duty, dear lady, and I trust I have done no more than that. It is hard for me to say 'bear without repining;' but if you will do so for the sake of the Church, whose child you are, verily you shall have your reward. It cannot

last for ever. We have, all of us, our trials, and none may be perfectly happy here. 'Earthly trouble,' as the hymn beautifully says—

> 'Earthly trouble is the thong
> To lash us all the saints among.'

Do not take Mr Harrington's foible so much to heart. Let him have his way, and—might I venture without offence to say it?—do not answer him; leave him when he is angry, and let pretty Miss Emma go away too; for the sight of one child may, in his dark moments, remind him of another who does not deserve so well of him. Pardon me, madam, if I have said too much."

It was with simple Adam as with the rest. He did not in his heart, for he could not, as many did, look upon my mother as the source of all our wretchedness; but much, he believed, might have been avoided by a more prudent mode of treatment. Alas! it was a prudence that she would gladly have acquired—but where was she to learn it? Who could teach the lesson that was to save the lamb from the knife of the slayer?

Friendless abroad—pursued with untiring barbarity at home—impaired and wasted by bodily suffering and long anxiety on my account, God at length had mercy on his child, and took her to himself. Her illness was of short duration. She died. Be satisfied that I state the fact. The horrible scene is never to

be recorded. It was a winter's morning—three o'clock had just struck. It was bitter cold. I had excluded my father violently from the chamber of death, in which the clammy clay-cold moisture of mortality was already rising. He struck at the door, stamped, stormed —called her a hundred hideous names—swore——I cannot proceed. The sacrifice was accomplished. The gasping sufferer gave me her last look—fonder and fonder it grew, as it retreated from the world—she pressed my hand, and whispered, "*He has killed me!*" The whisper was drowned in the ravings of the drunkard, who had yet to be conscious of his victory—yes, his victory—for my poor mother was a corpse.

Mr Clayton had reached this point in the melancholy narrative, when a sharp knocking at our door startled us both. A man entered the room in haste, and out of breath, enquiring for Mr Stukely. He had been sent from the infirmary. A patient, exceedingly ill, had requested to see me whilst he was still able to make himself understood. The messenger did not know the name of the individual, nor how he had become acquainted with my present abode. He had received his instructions from the hall porter, and he thought he had heard that functionary say that the patient was an aged person; but of this he would not be quite sure. Puzzled and wondering, I turned

to Mr Clayton. There was no time for delay, and he recommended my immediate departure. Stopping the history of poor Emma for the present, I accordingly set off—and the messenger, wiping the heavy perspiration from his brow, followed immediately.

PART X.

THE HISTORY OF EMMA FITZJONES CONCLUDED.

"*Orlando*—Oh, good old man! how well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty, not for need!
Thou art not for the fashion of these times,
Where none will sweat but for promotion;
And having that, do choke their service up
Even with the having: it is not so with thee.
"*Adam*—Master, go on; and I will follow thee,
To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty."

As You Like it.

When I reached the infirmary, a young man, standing at the street-door, looking pale and anxious, took off his hat and bowed respectfully. I recognized him as an old acquaintance; but a difficulty of remembering names, which I have experienced from childhood, and still suffer, prevented my addressing him by his title. I returned his salute, and walked on. He followed me up stairs; and, when we had ascended the first flight, he touched me with an infirm hand softly upon the arm.

"You know me, sir—don't you?" said he.

"Yes, by sight, very well. What is your name?"

"I am Simmonds's grandson," he replied. "The old gentleman is dying up stairs, sir."

"What!" said I, "poor Simmonds of Cambridge?"

"Yes, sir," answered the man, whom I immediately knew again. "He's going, poor old man—very fast. How is he now, ma'am?" he enquired, turning upon a nurse who passed us at the moment. The latter made no answer, and proceeded on her way. "Oh, I am sure he is sinking!" he continued, bursting into tears, and yelling aloud.

"Don't you be a fool there!" thundered a voice from an enormous hall-chair, which wanted only a few articles of furniture to render it a snug box, fit for the retirement of a beadle or a porter in the evening of his life. "Don't you be snivelling there, just by them wards! What do you think patients is made of?"

"How unfeeling they all are!" exclaimed the grandson. "Come this way, if you please." We mounted another staircase, and arrived at a large door. The young man was about to open it, when he stopped suddenly.

"It's no good," he said; "I can't go in. I don't know what's the matter with me; but I have come so queer all over me, that I can't move a step."

"What are you alarmed about?" said I. "Is Simmonds in that room?"

"Yes, sir, and he is dying, I am sure. I can't bear to look at him. I never saw a man go in my life;

and a man that's related to you, and that one knows —oh, dear me!" and the grandson roared and blubbered afresh.

"You are a coward," said I.

"No, I am not," he answered quickly. "I fought a man on *Parker's Piece* double my weight, and licked him too. This doesn't feel like being frightened. It's an awful feel. Did you ever see any one die, sir?"

"Tell me—how did Simmonds get here? Does he know of my coming?"

"Oh yes! he sent me after you, sir; but I didn't like to leave the place any more than I liked to stop in it—so I gave the boy threepence to run to your inn. By the by, he owes me threepence—for I gave him sixpence, and asked him to get change."

"Who told him that I was in Huntingdon?"

"I did, sir. I was sitting at the window in the ward, by his bedside, when you and another gentleman went out at the street-door. I thought, somehow, it was you, and yet you looked older a good deal than when you was up at college. But when you began to walk, I was satisfied at once; for you know you always used to stoop and swing your arms, and so you did directly; and then I called out to grandfather that I was quite sure Mr Stukely had just left the house. The bed-maker told me that you had just been to the matron, and then grandfather made me run to her to get your address; and, when I got it, he told me to

fly to you as fast as I could, or he should be dead before I got back; and I really thought he would, and so I sent the boy."

"How came he here? Is he very poor?"

"Oh, not at all poor! He has saved up a pretty bit of money, we all know; but he has been very stingy of late, and wouldn't spend a penny on himself. Soon after you left Cambridge, sir, he came over here, and has been leading a rum sort of random life ever since, going into one cheap lodging after another —and never stopping in one longer than a week at a time. He never would tell any of us what he wanted here. Father thought the old gentleman was demented; and so he sent me here to look after him, afeared that he should destroy his existence, or even make away with his money. I have been with him for the last two months, but he almost starved me to death; and I was thinking of going back, when this terrible illness came upon him, and laid him on his back. I wanted him to have the doctor at home, but he wouldn't think of it, for he said it would cost money —and he had none to spend. He made me apply for an admission-ticket to this place, and here he has been since Monday week."

"Tell him I have arrived," I said.

"Oh no! Go in at once—there's a good gentleman," replied the youth. "He is very anxious to see you. I thought he would have jumped out of bed with joy when I told him you had been in the house."

"But I may alarm him if I go in too suddenly."

"Oh no, no! I am sure you won't, sir—oh, pray, do go in!" he continued, shaking from head to foot with fear. "You'll find a nurse in the room. Perhaps I shall be better in a little time. I'll wait here, sir, and if you want me, call. Oh, dear me! It's the house I think. There's such a smell of sickness in it, that it makes your heart drop within you."

I opened the door without another word, and entered a ward filled on either side with beds, every one sustaining its own sick occupant. I walked along the room, and passed the beds in order. In the last I discovered the well-known countenance of my ancient friend—but how much altered! There lay, indeed, poor Simmonds—every month that had elapsed since our last meeting having fallen upon his aged head with the weight and power of a twelvemonth. He had arrived at the outer gate—the portals were opening, and Death waited to guide the paralysed old man gently into the lovely land beyond. It was no leap for him, to whom life had become already a load too heavy to be borne—an impediment, and no upholder of the spirit, matured and unimpaired, and riper than ever for its heavenly employment. There lay my good old friend—his hoary locks, scanty and long, shading, as with a delicate and silver veil, the eye that lacked its speculation; there, breathing hard and quickly, but quiet as a child that knows no sin—neither alive nor dead—he tarried for the word that

should command him hence, and find him not unwilling to be gone. I hesitated for a time to break the slumber on which he seemed to move so smoothly homeward, and would not have committed the unrighteous act, had not the sleeper breathed my name, and given me reason to believe that my presence was still needed to bring perfect peace to him who had arrived so near to it. I answered him, and the dying man opened his eyes quickly, as the dreamer starts from his horrid brain-world into truth and reality. I called him by his name, and told him that his old friend Stukely was at his side.

"Poor lad—poor lad!" he gasped, and stopped for breath.

"Do you know me, Simmonds?" I enquired.

"Yes, yes!" he answered, staring into my face; "the boy told me you were here. How did you find me out?" It took him some time to say as much as this. He ceased a dozen times to recover breath, and he spoke in a whisper.

"Do not distress yourself, Simmonds," I said. "Give me your hand. I will talk to *you*."

"The screen, the screen!" he exclaimed, drawing from the coverings his dried-up trembling hand, and pointing with a bony finger to the opposite side of the apartment.

"What of it?" I asked, noticing the moveable partition which he referred to.

"Bring it here. They'll let you. They put it

before the man that died last night. It will be my turn soon. I want to speak to you. Why need they hear?"

I communicated his wish to the attending nurse, and his request was instantly complied with.

"And now, sit down," he said, "and tell me—is it true?"

"What?" I enquired.

"Are you ruined?" he whispered. "Have you nothing left in the world? Did they succeed?"

"I have had my full share of worldly trouble since we parted, Simmonds; but I cannot complain now."

"Where is your poor father?" he asked.

"In heaven, I trust, Simmonds."

"What!" he said, interrupting me. "His troubles killed him, then, at last? Ah, I thought they would! It was much for one man to bear."

"Did you know my father, then? How—when did you see him?"

"When he came to look for his runaway," replied the old man, who gathered strength as he proceeded, possibly from the mental effort that the reminiscence occasioned, or it might be only from the physical excitement. "When he came for you, sir, time after time, waiting up two days this time, and three days the next, and then going back to London post-haste, to prop his falling house, or to bury his poor wife, who took to bed with her a broken heart—and never rose with it again. Poor gentleman!"

A fit of coughing checked the speaking man, and he motioned to me eagerly for the medicine that lay at his bedside. I gave it to him, and he said, murmuring to himself,

"Yes, that was the time!"

"He was grieved, Simmonds, not to find me—was he not?"

"Heart-broken, sir!—like his wife; but he was a man and she a woman. A man may live with a broken heart, but a woman can't."

"Simmonds, I had a loving father, and I behaved most cruelly towards him."

"Where did he meet with you at last? We scoured the country for you, but could get no news at all. When he left me to go to London, he went first to Huntingdon. He told me he would write to me. He never did; but I knew that he lived in the city, and so I travelled by the coach to London. I had never been there before, and I was seventy-eight and more. I couldn't find him in the city, and so I came back; but I set out for Huntingdon again, and here I have been, looking for you and him, sir, ever since."

"How glad I am to meet you, Simmonds!"

"Yes; I heard two young doctor gentlemen yesterday, at the next bed, laughing at me to themselves, and saying they were sure the old man couldn't last the night out; but something inward-like kept telling me I shouldn't go 'till I had heard about you. Now I am

satisfied, and I don't care how soon the Lord thinks fit to take me. My business is nearly settled here."

"Tell me, Simmonds—can I do any thing to help you?"

"How did matters turn out, sir, with your father? You'll excuse my rudeness."

"As badly as they could. He died a ruined man!"

"And what, in Heaven's name, are you doing, sir?"

"I believe I shall do well. I have suffered much, Simmonds, but my prospect brightens."

"Don't be angry with me, Mr Stukely. I don't mean any harm—but if you would, sir"——

He hesitated.

"Speak on, old friend," I said. "I am not so vicious as I have been. You remind me that I have need of your forgiveness."

"You never wronged me, sir, in your life. I couldn't bear to see you led away. I have saved a little money, sir—it's very little—not above ninety pounds. You wouldn't, would you?—might I be so bold—I"——

The poor invalid grew flushed and nervous in the endeavour to express himself, and his voice thickened, and the medicine was once more had recourse to.

"Will you accept it, sir?" he said at length. "I have no further use for it. I mean no offence, but I was bold enough to put it by for you. It is hardly

worth your having, but it may be useful. Your good father, sir, was very kind to me."

"I do not thank you the less, Simmonds, because at the present moment I have no need to take advantage of your kindness. I am not wholly unprovided for. Heaven has furnished me with a friend who will not easily desert me. Would that he were here now to witness your generous conduct!"

"But indeed, sir, the money is yours. When I heard it whispered in Cambridge that you were quite undone, I put it on one side; and I have got it here, sir, under my pillow, all in bank-notes—tacked in my waistcoat. Do take it!—I shall die the happier for it."

I thanked Simmonds for his kind intention, but firmly declined to accept his gift. Was there not one without who had a fair and legal claim upon the grandsire? Had he not established it by a perseverance and self-denial that had already threatened to give way, so difficult were they of endurance? In any extremity, I would not have disturbed the grandson's right. Now, I had not even the temptation to do him wrong. We spoke together of my college days, and Simmonds recounted to me many a touching passage in my father's short acquaintance with him, that carried to my heart the bitterest sorrow and self-reproach—both how vain and ineffectual! The enfeebled sufferer soon overtasked his strength. At first he paused, delayed, and stammered, then resumed without

success, at length ceased from exhaustion! I placed his head upon the pillow, and held his hand in mine. He breathed with difficulty. Soon, however, his lips moved again, and his eye fixed full upon me. I checked him, but the embers of life flashed up for an instant, and the spirit would not be controlled.

"Do you remember, Mr Stukely?" he said, and stopped.

"What, Simmonds?" I asked.

"When you were reading up at college—a Sabbath-day—I spoke to you?"

I saved the old man further speech. I remembered well the circumstance that crossed his faded memory. He had found me at my studies one Sunday morning. He had begged me to desist. I laughed at him, and refused.

"Yes," I replied—"I recollect it, friend; what of it?"

"I have often thought," continued he, "you missed every thing after that. Nothing prospered. How could it? I am dying, Mr Stukely. Promise one thing to poor Simmonds."

"I will; what is it?"

He pressed me tightly as he might, and entreated with his lack-lustre eye—"*Do not work again upon the Sabbath.*" Singly the words fell from his pale lips, and with their earnest utterance he ceased to speak. I gave him the assurance he required, and he thanked me with his looks. Vain were fresh attempts at con-

versation. Life ebbed apace—his eye closed—he slept and breathed. I sat at his side for an hour. He remained in the same condition. The screen was removed, and air was permitted to flow with balmy softness over the patient's cheek. What could it now do more than fan the death-fire that was already kindled there? As I sat by him, the nurse advanced to me. "The poor old man," said she, "slept in that way all day yesterday. He may linger on for some hours yet. When he goes off, it will be as sudden as the snuff of a candle, and about as quietly." I gave the nurse my address, and told her that I would gladly remunerate a messenger who should bring to me, before nightfall, an account of the patient's state. If he should rally and ask for me again, I hoped she would immediately recall me. She promised to do so, and I took my leave of her. At his place near the door, I found the grandson, eating with apparent enjoyment, and with much avidity, a mass of bread and cheese.

"Is he dead?" he asked immediately.

"He is not." I answered. "He sleeps. Go to his bedside, and watch him closely. You may lose him before you are aware of it it."

"Oh, I can't!" he cried out; "I couldn't go into that room again for all the world. Let alone grandfather, there's that fellow with the *hairysipperless* a bed or two off him. He's enough of himself to sicken a chap for a week. I can't go in, sir. I couldn't to save my life."

"This is very unbecoming," I replied. "You seem to have a great deal of feeling. It should teach you better things."

"It's no use talking, sir," he answered quickly, and walking back a step or two. "I have got a fright upon me, and I can't conquer it. I have been overcome ever since the morning; and I could as soon walk into my grave alive as into that there horrid room."

"Very well," said I, "attend to me, then. I am afraid the sun has risen upon poor Simmonds for the last time."

"You think so—do you, sir?" roared the youth, interrupting me. "Oh, dear me! I guessed it—poor old man!—I guessed it!"

"Moderate your grief, and listen. Should he die to-night, you are his nearest friend. Look under his pillow."

"What!" he exclaimed, "afore he's buried? Oh, bless your heart!"

"When you please. But look in time—for there's a treasure which will be your own."

"Why, what do you mean, sir?" he enquired, his countenance displaying an awakened curiosity.

"Beneath his pillow," I continued, "he has placed his waistcoat. He sleeps upon it now, and there, sewed up in it, are ninety pounds. You will see the old man buried decently, of course. The rest of the money is yours, to convey to Cambridge to your father."

"What!" said he, "grandfather got ninety pounds there!—I thought the old man had been saving up. What! under his pillow, with all them thievish nurses running in and out! I am very much obliged to you indeed, sir—Oh, here's a chance I've run! Why, ten to one, they have grabbed it since you came away. I hadn't better lose a minute. If father knew it, he'd break my head in two."

He said no more. He bounded from me like a deer. His painful affection was forgotten. The loathed chamber and the grisly occupants no more thought of. Mammon had revealed himself in one bright corner. What foul irregularity and odiousness cannot he adjust and dignify, or render with a touch invisible! Alack for human nature! With the rapidity of light, the grandson flew to the grandsire's bed. With the vehemence of natural love, I beheld him, as I quitted the place, smoothing softly and with care——that grandsire's pillow!

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when I was summoned for a second time to the infirmary. At four o'clock poor Simmonds had been pronounced *in articulo mortis*, and the attendant did not fail, according to my parting injunction, to make me acquainted with the fact. It was little that I could do in this extremity for the faithful gyp. The grandson sat at the foot of the bed, and held down his head for grief or shame. I told the nurse that the youth was furnished with the means of providing for his

relative; and he made no answer. I concluded therefore that he had found his prize. Twenty-four hours afterwards, Simmonds breathed his last; and a purer soul never winged its timorous way upward to the gates of heaven, doubtful of its right to enter there.

* * * * *

It was evening before Mr Clayton resumed the narrative of the unfortunate Emma Harrington. I would gladly have postponed the task to a more fit and suitable season. For one day, I had seen and heard enough of human misery—for one day, I had had enough of chastisement; but I chose rather to indulge the wish than to express it. It was a sharp, cold evening, and we placed our chairs on either side of a cheerfully burning fire. Candles were brought, and the hangings of the window closely drawn.

"Shall we proceed?" asked Mr Clayton.

I answered in the affirmative; and he produced the manuscript, opened it, and read.

I recount my history, and you believe it is a fable. You marvel at the hideous picture, and deny it to be human. So did they all. You cannot conceive Man the monster. You are proud of Humanity, and cannot suffer the veil to be drawn, and the naked soul to stand in light. Stukely, I ask not men to take for granted this miserable tale. I carry my appeal to the bleeding heart of woman. There I found my claim

to be believed. Dreadful as is my fate, think not that it stands alone in the domestic history of despotism. Tyranny is unbounded when its sphere of exercise is circumscribed. Cruelty is unrestrained where no eye can watch its deadly strokes; and merciless it is, oh! rest assured, where its victims are the uncomplaining and the weak. A hundred and a thousand gentle sufferers shall bear witness to the faithful record of my mother's wrongs, and find in them the echo of their own uncredited and unheeded injuries.—She died, *murdered* by my father. I speak calmly and without passion. I have no softer word to express the numberless acts of persecution beneath which she sickened, drooped, and fell. — I passed the bitter night of her decease with her, and about her bed. I was frantic. What was to be done? Whither should I go? I was dull, stupid, and confounded when I ceased to rave; and I stared at the dead body without a sigh or a tear, passionless and unconcerned, as the pale object before me. For days I had anticipated her death; but now that it had come, my senses were stunned. A tremendous blow had fallen—so tremendous, that the common emotions of Nature were superseded by a breathless tranquillity, supernatural and intense. I could not think, nor attempt to view my new position. And I felt no pain. The time for that had not arrived. The smart does not accompany always the first infliction of the wound. The shock precedes the pang by many an hour. There

was a void at my heart—that I knew full well. The *aching, agonizing* sense of loneliness—*that* was yet to come. And my father, too! the intoxicated maniac—he persisted in his violence and tumult; and remained hour after hour at our door, execrating the poor inanimate thing that had been carried from his clutch, and showering on my head a hundred fearful menaces. If he ceased for an instant, it was to renew the clamour with redoubled vehemence, and with still fiercer exclamations. I heeded him not. I neither called upon him to desist, nor vainly sought to appease him by informing him of his loss. Dreary, desolate, terrible night! Millions of happy souls were carried through thy hours in gentle and unruffled sleep. What had I done as yet to be condemned to watch thy lazy, dismal progress in that black chamber—at that most fearful season? But the night passed away—daylight had already gleamed—the angry man was silent. My guardian angel profited by the moment—took pity on me, and closed me in his arms. I slept. For an hour all was forgotten; and the sleeper whose eyes had shut in Paradise had not visions more glowing than my own. Strange, mysterious existence! What puppets are we in the great Show of Life, urged by a machinery intricate and inscrutable, and helpless as dependent when moved by the resistless springs of an invisible world! I awoke to be for one moment ignorant of my bereavement—unconscious of the scene that had been enacted not three hours before—fresh

from a heavenly dream did I awake, oblivious of the past, quiet, peaceful, and happy. For one brief instant only did I stand on the bright eminence, and breathe the grateful atmosphere. Down was I dashed, and with one exertion of memory plunged into an abyss of misery—from which I rise now—only now, Stukely, when my grevious sins are purged, and pardon and felicity are secured.

The morning was already far advanced, and I knew not how to act. The servants had in all probability acquainted my father with the dissolution of his wife. I feared to approach him. I considered, and resolved to remain with the departed. The determination was scarcely formed before my father himself joined me in the apartment. He looked alarmed and agitated, and his hands shook with more than their usual trembling motion. He approached the bed, and removed the covering from the cold one's cheek. I chilled and sickened as he did so. I imagined that he sighed. Could it be possible? I looked up at him—and believed that I saw the dull eye suffused with tears. With my whole heart I hated him; but a gleam of sorrow and of pity passed across my spirit—and I forgot the natural cruelty of the man in commiserating the wretchedness of the slave. I thought not of his unnatural persecution. I remembered only that he had been tempted and was lost. He replaced the sheet—walked to the door, and bade me follow him.

"Come, Emma," he said in a subdued voice, and

with a tone that fell upon my ears strangely from his lips—" come to my room."

He departed, and I followed him. He closed the door of his library upon us, and he told me to be seated. I trembled, and complied with his request. He sat down also, and he pressed his face as tightly as he might against the palms of his quivering hands. He removed them. I was not mistaken—the stony heart was touched and softened——he wept.

" Where is your brother, Emma?" he asked.

I did not answer.

" Tell me," he continued—" where is your brother? I must know soon—better now."

I burst into tears.

" You will kill him—you will kill him!" I exclaimed in agony, remembering my mother's ceaseless anxiety and fear, and dreading now more than ever the interview that she herself would never have permitted. " Do not ask me; I must not say."

" This has been the cause of all," he said, in an offended tone. " Why this secrecy and under-handed system? *She* pursued it till she irritated and made me mad; and I have been driven to the wine when kindness would have lured me from it."

It was false. It was the self-convicted criminal bribing his conscience to be merciful. I did not dare to tell him so; but I did my mother justice, and rejected the excuse.

" Where does he live?" he asked again.

"Oh, I cannot tell you! I must not if I would."

"Very well!" he answered, rising from his chair, and walking quickly about the room. "Very well—let it be so."

I rose likewise to depart; but he prevented me.

"Stay," said he; "you shall go to him. It is not necessary that you should acquaint me with his place of residence. You shall go, Emma, and tell him what has happened. He must be present at the funeral. You can prepare him for that day—no one better. He is a violent boy, I know!"

"What!" I ejaculated. "Is he to come home, then?"

"Yes," repled my father. "And you will see him previously, and reason with him on the propriety of behaving well. We have had misery enough. He is a fiery and ungovernable youth. I never liked his eye. He never loved *me*. He was always an unnatural boy. You shall do it."

He moved nervously up and down the room, and spoke with excitement, quickly and by starts. It was not difficult to detect the feeling that was at work, and that compelled from his recreant heart every word that he addressed to me. *Fear* overthrew him—the fear of meeting face to face the child and champion of the unhappy wife. I had been deceived when I attributed to him the expression of a nobler emotion. I rejoiced at my discovery, and hoped that it might yet hinder an interview, the possibility of which I regarded with

affright. But I was mistaken; my father dreaded to meet his son—still more he dreaded to confront him unprepared, and at any moment. Henceforward he must live in constant apprehension. Any thing was better than this—and he resolved, therefore, to see him at once on the best terms he could command, rather than leave the meeting in uncertainty and environ it with peril. I was accordingly commissioned to bring him once more home. A sadder business it had never been my lot to undertake; and gladly would I have declined it, if the fear of something sadder still did not haunt me night and day, and render the crisis the least of evils to endure. Before setting out, however, on the unpropitious journey, I succeeded in extracting one promise from my father. Without it, I had refused to execute his wishes—and this, and any other, he would have granted speedily to ensure compliance with his will. It was, that he would on no account, and whatever might be the temper of my brother, use angry terms or violence towards him—that he would receive him kindly—make no mention of his former conduct—and permit him, the very day succeeding my mother's funeral, to return to school, and to remain there until his future plan of life should be decided on.

"It was a wise arrangement," said my father, "and should be acted on."

The love of his miserable life, and the fear of losing it—the strongest passions of the tyrant-coward's heart

—rendered him capable of every act that should give security to these. It was on the third day after my mother's decease that I left the parsonage for my brother's residence. My father gave me his company to the market-town, and his morbid anxiety hardly prevented him from taking his seat with me in the coach. Pleased would he have been to travel to the very school-gate, and to have waited there for the result of our conference. I had never walked with him in my life. The situation was a novel one, and no less novel than it appeared unnatural. My feelings were shocked; nature suffered a violation when he offered me his arm—and my heart expressed its shame when I accepted it, in the eloquent blood which it sent tingling to my cheek. Every joint in my frame, every limb and feature, revolted at the act. My knees shook —my feet crawled—and my face was turned towards the earth, as though abashed, and hopeless to find sympathy and recognition in the bright pure sky. To link my arm in that—oh, sickening effort, and impossible! One imperceptible touch, and I withdrew it again for ever. I was in the coach, and I watched him closely as he sat in the parlour of the inn before which the vehicle waited. He had already said *Farewell*, and wished me safely back again. He had already, for the twentieth time, reiterated his earnest wishes in respect of my brother; imploring me to soothe and pacify his boisterous and angry tempera-

ment, and to assure him of his father's readiness to forgive all previous transgression.

"It was my duty now," he added, "to give my brother good advice; and he and I would be the better for it."

Not content with these parting words, he remained in his seat for a few minutes, and then hurried to the coach again.

"Mind," said he, whispering to me for the sake of privacy. "Mind, no word, on either side, of what has happened. He returns directly—and no unnecessary irritation. That's as we agreed."

I nodded to him in acquiescence, and he retired once more to the room. There he resumed his seat, but rose again restless and unsettled, and with eyes and lips moving unsteadily, as if distressed with anxious thought. Then the sudden and loud smacking of a whip startled and called him to the window—reminding him of the very few minutes that were permitted him to convey whatever he might deem necessary to impress upon my mind; and he held up his finger to fix my attention on all that he had previously said, and looked pleadingly into my face until I turned loathingly away. Another glance enabled me to view him seated at a table, with the ready companion of all his hours. The wine-bottle was before him; and his trembling hand conveyed glass after glass to his lips, with fatal rapidity. At the end of a quarter of an

hour, all our preparations were complete. The luggage was secured—the ostlers and other men had retreated from the coach—and the driver was mounting his box. My father was again at my side. The men laughed as he approached me, heated as he had become with the drink, and wild in demeanour, and the coachman winked knowingly to the innkeeper, who stood at his own wide door. I blushed to the forehead. The wheels rattled on—for a minute my father kept pace with them—and, before he desisted, I was able to collect enough to fill me during my journey with alarm and wretchedness.

"Let the villain come," he exclaimed in the drunken burst of passion, "and try to murder me again!"

It was noon on the following day before I reached the sweet village in which my brother had passed so many years of his life. All was quiet and pensive in that happy valley; and I envied the ruddy and open countenances of its young inhabitants, whom the welcome sound of wheels had brought speedily about us. Many a smiling girl stood there, naked of foot, ill clad, worse fed, whose ripe affections no early blight had poisoned, whose days of lawful and unmingled joy had passed unharmed through every change of bud, of blossom, and of fruit. Childhood's eternal summer had kindled in her heart the flame that brightens as it burns—the immortal stream of hope, never to wax dim or be suppressed. The light had

never penetrated to my poor heart—all there, was blank, and chill, and dark. The face of one young child beamed with ingenuousness and beauty; she knew the house of Mr Percival. I made her my conductress to the school. How few of us are satisfied with happiness itself! I offered the little girl a few pence for her pains: she declined them, but asked me to take her with me to my home—to remove her from the shadow of an angel's wing, and to surround her with the terrors of the condemned! It was a holiday at the school. The younger boys were in the playground, vociferating and labouring at their games. The senior scholars had been permitted to walk abroad, and were not expected home till evening, Amongst the latter was my brother. I was invited by Mrs Percival to remain in the house until his return. But I hoped he would not be far from the school; and the longing that I had to see him more than half assured me that I should meet with him. I went, accordingly, in search. A gardener was at work on the lawn. I stopped as I passed him, and enquired if he knew Frederick Harrington.

"Do you see that, mum?" said he, pointing to a jug of beer that was at his side.

"Why?" I asked.

"Well, do you see it, mum. 'Cause that's his'n. He is the only young gentleman in this here school as knows what eddication is, and as larns manners. Whenever Muster Pusseyval wants to enjoy hisself,

and gi'es the young gentlemen a holiday, Muster Harrington could no more pass this here gate to go into the village without giving I a summat for luck, than I could swallow it without drinking his health. I'm a-going to make this here nosegay for him."

"What, for his sister?" I asked eagerly, believing for the moment that he had received some intimation of my coming, although I could not imagine how.

"Not exactly, mum; but a *wery* near relation," and he winked coarsely as he spoke, and grinned unmeaningly.

"Tell me," I continued—"where can I find him? Which way does he walk?"

"P'r'aps, mum," answered the gardener, "you'll think I am romarncing, but I mean neither more nor less than I am going to say. He's so very industrious, that, whenever he goes out for pleasure, he always follows the plough. Now, what can you make of that? Can you *transmit* that?"

I concluded the man was tipsy, and I walked on without further conversation.

He permitted me to reach the gate, and then he ran after me.

"If you really want Master Harrington," he said, addressing me, "I can tell you where he is; but you mustn't split, mum, to the governor. If you goes through the village, and turns down the lane at the end, you'll come in about two minutes to a public. That there's *The Plough*, and if you'll enquire for him

there, why, there you'll find him. I shouldn't be noways disheartened to drink your health, mum, on the same occasion."

Drink again! was the horrid word to ring for ever in my ears! Was there not one spot of earth free from the enslaving passion? The very sound was cloying. I gave the beggar the means he asked, and turned from him with disgust. But what had he said of my brother? Whither had he directed me to go? What could he mean by asking me to keep his occupation secret? What was that occupation? What, on such a fair invigorating day, could induce him to forsake the beauteous scene, in the midst of which I stood elevated and exulting, in spite of all my care and misery—so powerful for good, so very bright was all I saw? What lure enticed him to the alehouse—that nursery of crime—that grave of all the home affections? I had no leisure for consideration. I was already in the lane, and the sign of the public-house was dangling from the low roof before my eyes. The gardener had surely mocked me, and I asked for my brother at the door of the unsightly hut, with no expectation of hearing news of him. But I was deceived. The coarse proprietor of the house surveyed me curiously, whispered to a clown who was busy within the bar, and then nodded familiarly, telling me that the gentleman would soon be with me. The lout mounted a staircase that conducted to an upper room, and in an instant afterwards, I heard a

loud laugh that I recognised for my brother's, notwithstanding the unusual and rough exuberance with which it was sent forth. Then did I remember, for the first time since I had quitted home, that he was as yet ignorant of our loss—that I had yet to impart it to him, and to depress his gaiety with the most melancholy news that had ever been conveyed to him. I endeavoured to summon courage for the task. Again I heard the wild and extravagant laughter, but this time in fellowship with other tones of merriment, that proceeded from another gladdened heart. What could my brother Frederick want here? In another minute he appeared at the top of the steps, followed by a youth of his own height, and apparently of his own age. That youth was James Temple. My brother was strangely altered. I had not seen him for eighteen months before, and he had become a man. The ingenuous and handsome countenance of which I had been so proud, had assumed an air that startled and confounded me. The open and generous expression which stamped on every feature the impress of a young, a glowing, and an honest heart, was gone; and recklessness, immodesty, licentiousness, and turbulence, were mingled and concentred in the face on which I looked with shame. He had risen from a game at cards, for he held a few in his hand when he quitted the room above. Perceiving me, he threw them instantly behind him, and a moment afterwards

he was at my side. His friend retired, and we were alone.

"What has brought you, Emma?" he asked at once, quickly—his eyes glaring as he spoke. "It has happened, then—has it? He has killed her at last. Now, don't wait—don't go round about. Let me know the worst without words."

"She is dead," I answered.

"The monster!" he exclaimed, gnashing his teeth, and clenching his fist, reminding me of the violence of his childhood. "The villain! he shall answer it. Now, tell me, Emma—did he use outrage? Disguise and conceal nothing. The law shall follow him to the grave. If it could follow him beyond it, and fix him in everlasting fires, by Heaven I wouldn't spare him the smallest pang! He shall feel it, or may I die this moment! I tell you again, Emma, attempt no hiding of his guilt. I shall discover every thing; and, if it costs me my life, I'll have blood for blood."

"Oh, Frederick!" said I, interrupting him, and terrified at his passion, "you cannot know what you say—how dreadfully you talk! Your Bible never taught you this."

"My Bible!" he answered with a sneer that deformed his every feature, and rendered fiendish the face that nature modelled from an angel's. "Bah! cant and priestcraft! Talk of something else."

"I will talk of nothing else, Frederick," I returned,

"until you have recovered your reason, and cease this blasphemy. We have no friend left us now but *Him*. Beware how you lose that friend—and draw down upon your head the vengeance of an insulted Heaven!"

"Heaven!" he replied, in no way softened by my appeal. "Heaven! What have you received in the way of good from heaven, that should teach you to be its warm defender? Don't you be ignorant and weak enough to be imposed upon by all you hear. Why has Heaven permitted my father to rob me of comfort, happiness, and peace of mind, since the hour that I was sensible of life, and capable of enjoyment? Why has Heaven permitted him to persecute my poor mother for months and years, until the persecution killed her? Why has Heaven not separated them before?—and in separating now, why has Heaven destroyed the innocent, and left the murderer to live and riot as he pleases. Don't turn away from me," continued he—"that's the way with all of you. Answer me—let me know what can be said to this? I'll listen to reason, and to nothing else. If Heaven has permitted all this, what is it better than hell—what is your God"——

"Frederick," I cried out, "I'll hear no more. I am too young to reason with you, but my soul revolts at what you say. I want no other argument to persuade me you are wrong. I will trust the rising indignation that spurns your reasoning with fear and

shuddering, and cannot tamely bear the violation you would madly perpetrate. Tell me—who are your companions?—what are you doing in this house? You have been reading impious books. Something has warped your better judgment, and has made shipwreck of your happiness."

"Do not talk dogmatically of things you do not understand," he said sarcastically. "Who taught you to call books impious? Have you ever read them? Oh, to be sure, there's no purity in them—no purity in any book but that of which my father is the authorized interpreter—whose doctrines he has taught and studied for so many years, with such advantage to the world, and so much profit to himself! I wish you joy of your book, and I hope you are pleased with its delegated minister. Miserable humbug!"

I endeavoured for a little time to collect myself, and to get language to express the feelings which were battling in my bosom. I knew him to be wrong. I was satisfied that his reasoning was unsound, and that, in a moment, an experienced mind could have hurled him with confusion from his untenable position; but I was distressed, grievously shocked, and flurry prevented thought. I had nothing to say, and, grieved beyond expression to find him triumphing where discomfiture should have abashed and routed him, I could only weep, and, as a weak woman, rely for eloquence in my tears. The cold and heartless

lesson that he had learned, had not robbed me of his natural affection. He took me to his arms, and sought to console me.

"Never mind these things, sister," said he, pressing my hand. "We will never speak of them again. We have nothing to do with them. Right or wrong, they can never make me love you the less. I must be every thing to you now, Emma—brother, mother, and father; you may trust me. Tell me of our poor mother. Let me hear every thing connected with her end—mind, Emma—every thing. Why do you cry so?" he continued. "I could not help speaking as I did just now. I will not refer to the subject again. These abstract questions should not make us miserable."

"Oh, Frederick!" said I, "that man has much to answer for. You are to be commiserated. You have been thrown upon the world. You have never known the value of a mother's hourly communications. You have never listened to truth dropping into the ready heart from the lips of love, that give a sanctity even to holiest things. You would not think as you do had you been at home, and had that home been peaceful as it should have been. You have depended from childhood upon the purchased kindness of strangers. You have grown up as dear mother often said, not as she would have trained you, but as Providence allowed you. You will get older. You will meet with good and pious men, and you will be more

grieved for this unhappy way of thinking than I am now. But what awaits our wretched father, who is the cause of all?"

"It may be as you say. To please you, I will think it may be. But tell me, Emma—how fared it with poor mother?"

Frederick received from me a circumstantial account of our home proceedings since he had last been with us. I had come to him with my heart full of accusations and reproaches against the author of all our woes; and to his ready sympathy, of which I was sure I looked forward for my solace and alleviation. But the mood in which I had discovered him, and the principles by which I found him to be actuated, suggested another line of conduct, which the safety and happiness of us both rendered it incumbent upon me to pursue. There was no need to spur him on to vengeance—it required not a heart-rending recital of our history to inspire him with the desire of vindicating his departed mother's injuries. Those injuries he had brooded over until a spark, a word, had become just necessary to ignite the heated and long-cherished animosity. I found it difficult to mitigate the conduct of my father. From what point of view, indeed, did it admit of palliation? Still, against my very conviction, I was led on, by the impetuosity of Frederick, until I beheld myself extenuating every fault of our common persecutor, seeking for excuses where the glaring and enormous guilt denied, even in the most

forgiving, a hope of pardon for the offender. The more my brother spoke of revenge and retribution, the stronger did I plead for his intended victim—the warmer were my entreaties for forbearance, and oblivion of the past. I put in a favourable light all that had passed, since the death of our mother, between my father and myself. I told him of his sorrow when she had gone, and his earnest desire to see his too long absent son. I did not fail to add, that it was by his express wish that I had undertaken my present journey; and that, in spite of all that I had urged to the contrary, he had resolved to have him home without delay.

"Who knows, Frederick," said I, "but that the melancholy death of our poor mother may have struck terror and remorse into his soul, and have startled him from the path down which he madly plunged year after year! Let us hope that he has awakened to a sense of his wickedness. We cannot mend what has happened. Ought we to prevent our happiness for the future? Every thing depends upon our conduct during the next few days. Come home, as he proposes. Let it be on the day of the funeral—you will mark him well on that day. If his sorrow is sincere, his repentance genuine, neither of us can withhold our pardon to the sinner. It will be our duty then to provide for our future peace and quiet. Should he exhibit no true evidence of amendment—should he be the same ungovernable tyrant, you need not remain

with him another day. He has promised to provide for you—until he does, you can still reside with Mr Percival. If you love me, Frederick, and value my peace of mind, you will put an end to violence and tumult. I am worn out with them. Think not of heaping up the load of infamy and disgrace that has already buried our good name beneath its foul deformity; no good will come of that, to you, to him, to any of us. Level it, if you can, with the earth, and let its existence be forgotten amongst men."

I repeated my entreaties, and I subdued and cooled his heated temper. I received his faithful promise. He believed that I was right, and that it was useless to avenge what never could be repaired. He would not seek to do it. He would revisit home, as I had requested him, upon the day of the funeral. If his father was indeed as I had described him, he would be silent with respect to his former conduct, and no syllable from his lips should disturb the welcome and much-envied harmony. If it should be otherwise, he would absent himself at once, and await at school the determination of his parent with regard to his future prospects. With this understanding we separated—my brother returned to the school, I remained at the inn, from which the coach set out that evening that was to convey me to my home again.

Left to myself, I remembered that I had made no enquiry respecting the employment which had called him to the public-house. I had not spoken to him,

either, of his companion, who had left him as he caught sight of me. I desired eagerly to be informed of these. In my heart I believed that no good had drawn him to the hut, and a corresponding sentiment was entertained in respect of his friend and associate. I had scarcely permitted myself to form the latter opinion, before a gentle knock at the door of the room in which I sat, introduced to my presence the very gentleman himself. He entered the apartment with a very modest demeanour, and bowed profoundly; then, somewhat confused, he enquired if he had the happiness of addressing Miss Emma Harrington? Colouring highly, I answered in the affirmative.

"I have considered it my duty, Miss Harrington," he proceeded, "to apologize for what must have appeared to you an unbecoming rudeness. Before you leave us, may I hope that I am forgiven?"

He spoke in a sweet voice, and unhesitatingly, as one used to talk—confidently and well. I did not understand him, and I blushed more deeply than ever.

"Do not think ill of me," he continued, "because you found me where, in truth, my tastes would never have seduced me. Your brother has no doubt told you why and how I came there?" He stopped for my reply.

"Do you mean the inn, sir?" I asked in ignorance of his drift.

"Yes," he answered, with a faint smile. "Yes,

Miss Harrington, if you will condescend to honour it by that title. He has told you—has he not?"

"No. We did not speak, sir, on the subject. Do you come from him now? Have you brought a letter from him? Has he sent a message? He has not changed his mind, I hope?"

"Certainly not," was the reply. "Miss Harrington," continued Mr Temple, "your brother is my dearest friend. I have known him for years; I love him as a brother."

The young man spoke with fervour, and my heart warmed towards him as he said the words.

"He is worthy, sir," said I, "of your affection. He has a noble heart. He *had*," I continued, checking myself; "and I pray to God it may continue so."

"Yes, Miss Harrington," continued the gentleman in a musing tone, "he *had;* and let us hope he has. I risk much on his account. Do not suppose that, for one in whom I took a common interest, I could perform so much. For him, and him alone, do I venture to such haunts as that in which Miss Harrington surprised us both this morning. If I retreated hastily, and quicker than good manners would permit, it was to spare an explanation that would have pained us all to hear."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said I; "I do not quite understand."

"It would be useless to disguise the fact," he said

interrupting me. "Your brother has been in danger. He has been surrounded by companions who have led him into dissipation. He is safe now. I have never deserted him. I never will desert him. I have injured my own character by following him throughout his career of folly. I am satisfied to be spoken ill of, whilst I know that I have done my duty. Should you hear your brother's friend, James Temple, mentioned with disrespect, you will know the reason why."

I was still at a loss to gather the exact meaning of Mr Temple's words. I begged him to be explicit.

"A few words, Miss Harrington," he returned, "will explain as much as you desire to hear. The whole is, in truth, very little; but I wish you to do me justice. Pardon me if I say that injustice never accompanied beauty so perfect as your own. Frederick has been tempted to the wine-cup and the gaming-table."

"You do not mean it!" I exclaimed, starting with affright, and dreading to hear more.

"He has been tempted, and withdrawn from them," he added, in a louder voice. "I have watched him daily and hourly. I have seen him gradually falling beneath the wiles of wicked and designing men. I have interfered to snatch him from the trap. I have succeeded, and am happy."

"Then, indeed, we owe you much, sir. We are grateful for the act."

"I am more than overpaid to hear it from your lips. Do you return to ——— so soon?" he asked.

"Within an hour, sir," I answered. "You know my place of residence?"

"I am your brother's nearest friend. I know your melancholy history. Although far from you, I have ever had a lively interest in your welfare. Need I say that it is increased a hundred-fold by this delightful interview? Frederick and I have passed hours in bewailing your unhappy fate. Better days await you."

"Yes," I answered; "I do believe it."

"Nature," continued Mr Temple, "is kind. If she wounds—she heals. We do not always suffer."

"God is kind," I answered, "and often kindest where he seems most cruel."

"True," said Mr Temple. "Nature is but another word for the same idea; and something, too, more tangible."

"What is that?" I asked.

"Oh—closer to the senses—easier to conceive. We worship nature which we see—and this is true religion. How the heart overflows with adoration on a bright sunny day, on any spot of earth that is glowing with the variegated charms of the voluptuous goddess! How free and generous—how prodigal she is of all her gifts, giving alike to the rich and the poor, and preaching, with a voice as loud and expres-

sive as her own thunders, the doctrine of a universal love!"

"But what is all this, sir, to the poor sufferer?" said I, stopping him. "Sunny days bring little warmth to the bare heart of the orphan."

Mr Temple ventured to contest the point, and continued to panegyrize in the loftiest terms the principle which, he contended, existed, and governed throughout the whole visible world. It was a strange theory, and new to me. I could not realize it, nor adopt it to my own preconceived notions of the Everlasting Deity. Of the latter, in the affairs of this world, he seemed to take no account. He ended and began with *Nature*. All things were wrought by and through her, and we had only to submit to and obey her laws. There was a mystery about all he said; but he spoke with eloquence, and with a fervour that animated his countenance, and gave brilliancy to an eye that shone with the fire and impetuosity of unsophisticated youth. I was struck and pleased with his earnestness; and oh, how much did I regard him for his kindness towards my unfriended and neglected brother! It is very true, that here and there, in the vehemence of his argument, I was startled and unsettled by propositions which my native sense of truth at once rejected as unsound and perilous; but his expression of the heresy did not give rise to anger, nor permit me to think unfavourably of the speaker. I could not, at that distance from the moving springs that worked

within his crafty and inhuman heart, discover the motive and design of every word that fell, poisonous and sweet, upon my ears. What if his theory were dangerous and false, I believed his soul was pure, and flattered my imagination with the thought that I could see it beaming in his face. Hence, although he enforced the doctrine of personal unrestraint, and argued that the indulgence of what are deemed unlawful wishes, is sinful only when unnatural, and in opposition to the benevolent laws of nature; and further than this, pursued the theme, and drew the ready inference, that all are justified who obey the dictates of the passions: I did not express my indignation at the insidious and demoniac lore, and strike the tempter dumb upon the very threshold of his scheme. I have but feebly portrayed my first interview with the destroyer. I do not hope to convey to you the full impression of that short conference. I do not desire it. I have dwelt through many a weary hour upon this introduction into misery and guilt—for such it proved to be—and I have found, the deeper I have pierced, the carefully strewed seed of all the after-growth of crime. I ask you to explain the reason why the unprotected and the orphan are the chosen victims of your fellow-men? Why are they so greedily pursued, so cruelly deprived of that small share of happiness that belongs to their condition? James Temple knew me to be the most unfortunate of my sex, the most deserving of his pity and respect. He

saw me for a moment, and resolved upon my ruin. His first well-calculated step I have described. For a season the second was delayed.

The morning for my mother's funeral arrived. Stukely, my pen falters, and refuses to trace the narrative which it sickens me to recall. And yet it must be told. I have brought you to the climax of human wretchedness. Read and believe. I tell you that the strange tale is true—horrible it may be, it is—and yet I have survived it. Who doubts its authenticity? Let him carry it to the drunkard's habitation, and call around him first the miserable wife, and then the sobbing children, and let him astound their ears with the history that is their own. Oh! think not for an instant that exaggeration deforms the unsightly picture. The ugliness surpasses not the truth. Would that both could strike the conscience of one domestic murderer with effectual sorrow and remorse! The morning of the funeral had come. Ten o'clock had struck, and my brother had not yet appeared. He had arrived from the school late on the preceding evening, and had retired immediately to rest. I had received him, for my father had gone to his bed some hours before. I told him that our breakfast hour was nine o'clock, and he promised to meet his father at the breakfast table. I did not sleep that night. How could I? I walked restlessly about my room, longing for the morning to come, dreading its approach, and growing more and more anxious and alarmed as the

clock warned me at intervals of its advance. At six o'clock I rose. Another sleeper in the house had been disturbed before me, and was already moving. This was my father. I found him in his library. He looked pale and wearied, and his usual tremor unhinged his whole frame. When I opened the door of the apartment he started from his seat, and was frightened.

"Ah—yes," said he, recovering himself, "it is you: be seated, Emma. He has come, of course?"

"He has," I answered.

"Well—and he is well-disposed, is tranquil, as he should be on the sad occasion?"

"He has said little," I replied. "He has not yet risen. It was late last night when he reached home."

"Well, I shall see him soon. Does he return to-morrow?"

"It is his intention."

"Good. He will be soon provided for. I have obtained for him an appointment in India. Tell him so. It is better that he should pass the little time that he will remain in England away from home. It may save a breach. I cannot brook contradiction. I do not wish to gall and irritate him. He is overhasty, I have heard. But he seems peaceable, and disposed to keep so, I think you said?"

Early as it was, the wine bottle was already on the table.

"Father," said I, pointing to it, "what is that?"

"Not another drop!" he exclaimed impressively; "not a sup, as I am a living man! I should have shaken to pieces had I not appeased the nerves with *one* draught. But I have swallowed it, and I am quiet. I shall taste no more: take it away." At the very moment that he made this request, and as I approached the table to comply with it, he raised the decanter mechanically, and poured from its contents another glassful. Without a word or a sign, and as if unconscious of the act, he drank it off. To such an extent was he the slave of habit, that I am satisfied he was ignorant of having transgressed the rule which he had laid down for himself the very second before.

"Father," I exclaimed, "for Heaven's sake be cautious! Who shall answer for the effects of a single dram? Cease to be master of yourself, and I foresee the consequences. As sure as I am speaking, there will be mischief that never can be forgotten or repaired. Be warned in time, and avoid to-night the furious insensibility, from which you will wake to-morrow to imprecate yourself, and loathe the very light in which you walk. For your own sake be advised, and flee, for this one day at least, from the horrible temptation."

"Oh, trust me!" answered my father, made uneasy by the terms in which I had ventured to address him, "trust me—I will be wise. Here—take the key of the cellar. Let one bottle of wine remain for dinner. Produce no more. If I ask for more, refuse it. You

have me in your keeping. It is for you to prevent the mischief that you dread."

I secured the key with eagerness, and taking him at his word, placed beyond his reach every means of gratifying the insatiable lust. Breakfast was announced, and Frederick still was absent. I could not eat. Food had never been acceptable to my father so early in the day. We sat in silence, and the cloth was removed untouched by either of us. Shortly afterwards, a rustling and a moving about were heard directly overhead, and subdued talking on the stairs. A chill shot through me. The men had come to prepare the body for its last short journey. I wept, and my father sat over the fire, looking into it, and thinking, it may be, on the eternity into which he had hurried the uncomplaining sufferer. What an eternity for him!—I left his presence, and stole to the busiest chamber in the house, desirous of another leave-taking. The coffin was already closed. One person only was in the room, and that was poor Frederick, weeping at the coffin's foot, with the uncontrollable fulness of a heart-broken child. I walked to his side, and placed my hand in his. He closed me in his arms, and we had not a word to say, until the heart had wrung its last tear through his drowned and quivering eye.

"Did I not," he said at length,—"tell me, Emma —did I not obey her?"

"You did," I answered. "You never disobeyed her."

"But did I not offer a hundred times to come to her rescue? Did she not forbid it?"

"You have done your duty, Frederick. She was satisfied you had."

"If I thought otherwise, I could not live another hour. I am sure she was wrong; but I do not reproach myself for a strict compliance with her wishes."

"She is in heaven," I rejoined, "and smiles upon you for your filial love."

"Where is *he?*" he asked, turning from the subject. "I have not met him yet."

"He has expected you for the last hour or two. Come to him. He desires to see you."

"No—not at present. I shall wait here until the ceremony compels me to endure his sight. We are better and safer asunder. We will follow her to the grave in company. That is all he can require of me. I am happier alone. I could not talk with him."

"You will do nothing harsh and cruel, will you?" I asked, imploringly.

"No good can come of it. I will not give you pain unnecessarily, dear Emma. Death is no punishment to such a man. Torture for years, such as he inflicted, he deserves. It cannot bring her to life again. Would that it might!"

I had many things to do on this eventful morning, and I was obliged to leave my brother sooner than I wished. My anxiety prompted me to be continually

at his side; for, in spite of his assurances, I had little confidence in his power of forbearance. I knew that an angry word or look could overthrow a mountain of good resolutions, and render him as helpless as an infant in the hold, and at the mercy, of his excited and unfastened passions. I was aware, too, from many observations that had fallen from him, that his code of morality was lax, and justified to his mind acts that were criminal in themselves, and in the judgment of the world. His religious views had become fearfully dimmed, and he needed only the stimulus and the opportunity to become the sport and prey of notions that lead only to destruction. On these accounts, I trembled for him, and begrudged every moment that I passed away from him. Ill fortified he was to be alone in any place. Here, where he walked in the midst of danger and evil solicitation, he needed a hand ever present to guide him, and to warn him of the mine that one inconsiderate step would set thundering beneath his very feet.

At eleven o'clock, the small procession that constituted the ceremony of my mother's humble funeral was marshalled, and ready to proceed. My father and I were in the library, and waited for my brother. I heard his footstep on the stairs, and my heart beat painfully and quick. He descended slowly, and did not appear to delay or pause. In another moment he entered. I looked at my father, and he winced under the hard trial. He looked uneasily about him—cast

his eyes upon the ground—towards me—to the attendants—any where but there, where fear, shame, and acute vexation, all commingled, rendered one object intolerable to the sight. Frederick was very pale; but he looked subdued and placid. Perfectly collected, and in a distant manner, he bowed to his father, and the latter returned his greeting with a silent recognition, that betrayed at once the agitation of his mind, and the small ability that he possessed to check and hide the gnawing agony that seared his sinful soul. There was no warmer salutation. Not a word was spoken. The silence of death prevailed in the room, far more crushing, because inconsonant with the occasion, until my father was reminded that it was time to go forward. I saw them depart—I marked them when they followed, side by side, the remains of the deceased through the long avenue that led to the churchyard. Still not a word was exchanged. A handkerchief was in the hand of my father—the mourner's ensign! Frederick was overcome, and wept aloud and violently; his sobs and moans were carried through the air, and conveyed to my own distressed and heaving heart. I closed the casement, and escaped them. I was alone. I knew not that it was a useless prayer that nature prompted me to offer up for the safety and welfare of the beloved's soul. Had I been told so, I would not have believed the chilling tale. No sooner had I lost sight of the mournful retinue, than, overborne by an impulse of

love, I fell upon my knees, and implored God to give comfort and repose to her whom he had taken to himself. I did not rise until sweet assurance calmed my spirit, and gave it boundless confidence and hope. I desire no arguments to prove my fabric an unsubstantial and aerial vision. The wise may smile at my credulity, or pity the ungrounded heresy. Reason, stern teacher as she is, must never take from me the hold that Feeling gives me on yon invisible world of beatific spirits, linking me in deep, ineffable communion with the loved of old, and sustaining me with intercourse that knows no break—that has no cloud.

It takes but a little time to separate for ever the living from the dead, to place the latter in the cold, cold earth, and to render them, as though they had never been, objects for the memory, subjects intangible but by the unbounded, never-dying mind. The last office was performed, and father and brother were once more in the house together. I know not what had passed between them during their short absence. Certain it is they had spoken. The partition that had previously separated them was broken down, and communication, if not of the most friendly character, was, at least, unreserved. In spite of the evident attempts made by my father to appear at ease, awkwardness and anxiety were manifest in every word and movement. Once having addressed Frederick, he could not remain for an instant silent, but turned

from one subject of discourse to another, regardless of connexion or relation, as if silence were impossible to bear, and the least repose brought with it peril and alarm. Frederick, on his part, was taken by surprise, and by degrees regarded his parent with a kindlier spirit than I had ever ventured to expect from the impassioned boy. He listened to his father's questionings, and he answered with respect. A ray of joy stole across my heart, and, for the moment, I flattered myself with years of unmolested happiness—of harmony and peace. Not a word was said of the sad occasion that brought us again together. That was avoided studiously. But Frederick's future prospects were spoken of, and the nature of his employment explained to him. He seemed pleased with the pursuit, and eager for active, profitable life. Notwithstanding, however, the favourable aspect which matters had assumed; notwithstanding the bright gleam that passed through our home, lighting it up with unaccustomed lustre, I did not lose my timidity, nor wholly rely upon the sudden and violent reaction. I lingered near father and son, and, as though filled with the presentiment of what was too soon to happen, could not for any interval lose sight of them without anxiety, and an oppressive dread of danger.

The dinner hour arrived. We had no visitors. My father, Frederick, and myself sat down to the meal, and the previous conversation gave place to heaviness and ungraceful silence. The solitary

decanter of wine was on the table. My father drank from it sparingly, but Frederick emptied it with greediness. It was melancholy to behold the family sin taking possession of his soul so early in life; and I would gladly have persuaded myself that a desire to drown present grief, and no habitual vice, displayed itself in the eagerness with which he quaffed, glass after glass, the fatal liquor. Before the close of dinner, the bottle needed replenishing. My father looked at me enquiringly, but I did not heed him; for at the same time my eye was on my brother, and a glance enabled me to ascertain the heated and perilous condition towards which he was rapidly advancing. I took no notice of the hint. The repast was finished, and without a syllable I left the table. Against my own conviction I forsook my guardianship, and only to avoid a greater evil. For two hours I remained in my own room. I would not have quitted it again that evening, had not the never absent and tormenting anxiousness that accompanied every hour of my brother's sojourn with us, driven me back again to observe the progress of the new made reconciliation. I tripped confidently to the dining-room, opened the door, and was staggered, bewildered, and confounded by the view that I encountered there. Could I trust what my eyes presented to my waking mind? Or did I dream? Had I lost my recollection, my reason, in the conflict that my brain had undergone? The first object that I perceived upon the table was *a key!*

the *duplicate* of that which I possessed—the conductor to the wine-cellar. Wine of different kinds crowded the board, some in bottles, unopened; some in the like half emptied, and next to them vessels drained of their last drop. My father was transformed already into the wretched object that wine had ever rendered him. He had become sottish mad, and ignorant of his acts—his words—his thoughts. Frederick himself had partaken of the fearful beverage until excitement glared in every feature of his disordered countenance, and his veins swelled with the hot and bounding blood that passed along them. It was an awful season. One inconsiderate word from either—one exclamation—one dangerous half whisper might be destruction to them both. Careless children were they at the mountain's edge, unconscious of danger, and ready to take the step that dashes them to pieces. Who should have courage to venture near, and drag them backward from the yawning breach? Who would risk life now for the chance of sparing it? Oh, such a one was needed here to speak the word that might appease and save the helpless men who had ventured to the very brink of ruin! In my father's face I could not trace mischief. Was it possible that fear had still controlling power, and still protected him when every other feeling had given way beneath the maddening drink? Would for his own sake that it might be so! Yes, drunken anility and not ferocity seemed to be the prevailing humour. How long it would endure de-

pended on his companion and antagonist. Frederick had grown loquacious, his voice was thick, and it grew hoarse with exercise. There was spleen in every word he uttered, and anger, contempt, and bitterness. Ferocity, too, sparkled in his expressive eye, and corrupted every other feature. How he sat there, playing and trifling with his trembling prey, conscious of his power, and sharpening his appetite for mischief with the contemplation of his sacrifice! So might the young and bounding tiger, and so a human being with unbound passions, burning for revenge, and ripened even for murder, by the hateful and inciting juice. Neither of the men was disturbed at my approach. Each was too busy with his own peculiar thoughts. The chair of Frederick was drawn close to that of his father—his hand was upon his father's arm—his bloodshot eye was strained towards his father's sottish face. I remained at the door, fixed to the position in which my entrance had first placed me, and fearful of accelerating harm and evil by the progress of an inch.

"Tell me what you preach," exclaimed Frederick, laughing aloud and unmeaningly; "which side of the question do you espouse? They tell me you are a—what is it? a Calvinist. Who is he? Did he love wine—did he drink as jollily as we do? Oh, you are a rare old sinner! ha, ha, ha!" and he laughed on, and swallowed a glassful in the midst of it.

"Do not talk so wildly," said his father, endeavouring to escape from his side.

"And why not?" answered Frederick, rudely stopping him. "Who are you, to order, and to say how a man is to speak or behave?"

"I do not wish to molest."

"No, I'll take devilish good care you sha'n't," said my brother, interrupting him. "I say, parson, haven't you broken your heart in fretting after your son? Hasn't natural affection almost killed you? Why, what did you think had become of me? Do you believe, in that black heart of yours, that you are really on the road to heaven? Come, no flinching! Answer me like a man. Here, take your glass, I'll drink to our better acquaintance. We shall know one another better for the future."

My father writhed under his infliction. He had a character to sustain which he had never studied—for which he was but ill prepared. He burned to burst the chains by which he felt himself enthralled. The dread of consequences kept him as submissive as a beaten slave. Mine was the cruel lot to observe in silence and in horror. A bumper was quaffed in honour of the taunting toast, and Frederick was again pursuing his doomed victim.

"Look there," said he, pointing to me; "that's your daughter. I am told that you have behaved most lovingly to her. Look at her, man," he continued, seizing him by the wrist, "and see what a colour your kindness has brought upon her cheek. Look—she is paler than the lily, and that we know is joy's own

colour. You'll go to heaven for that, too. Why, you are a noble fellow to preach and pray, and tell us what we ought to do! Look me in the face!"

My father shook with rising passion, and he bit his lips, and drew his breath with difficulty.

"Look me in the face," continued the infuriated Frederick, for he had lashed himself to rage—"and let me see a pious monster—a religious fiend—a holy devil! Now, hear me. I have spent many an hour of my most miserable life—made miserable by you, in longing for this moment. I have looked forward to this interview till I have almost gone mad in waiting for it. I have walked for half a night listening to the wind screaming amongst trees, howling about tombstones, and over green graves, trying to keep down the horrible temptation that I have felt for years, to be your murderer. Hear, and understand me, I repeat it calmly—*to be your murderer.* I have seen the blooming and the young, without a crime, without the feathery burden of an unconscious fault, cut down in beauty, and removed from the earth which they were just beginning to adorn and dignify—and *I knew you* —the tormentor of your kind, the vilest of your race, in whose atmosphere to live was to breathe pollution, and to suffer death—I knew you to be alive, glorying in your defilement, pouring sorrow, distress, and misery on all who came within your reach, and rendering life a curse to all who had connexion with you. Do you think, I ask you, that I could deem it wrong

to remove for ever from the world the source of endless woe? One blow could do it. One blow, and in an instant there was peace for the most deserving. I could have struck you down, I could have dealt the blow without remorse—without one aching thought. Why, then, came I not to give it? I will not tell you, —but there was good reason for my absence. You were preserved not through my forbearance. The cause that interfered between me and my strong desire exists no longer. Now, I am free to act. Now I am here; and, monster, what prevents the accomplishment of what I have wished so long?"

"You dare not do it!" cried my father, starting from his chair, and eluding by the suddenness the griping hand of Frederick.

"You lie!" impiously replied the drunken boy, and following him as he proceeded from his seat.

It was my time to act. No longer capable of self-control, I placed myself between the angry men, and entreated the aggressor to desist. My influence and power over the unfortunate were gone.

"Stay you there," said he, placing me at a distance from them, "or begone, and do not intermeddle. I am tranquil, and am master of myself. We have a long account to settle; and it must be called over item after item."

"I do not fear you," muttered my father, gnashing his teeth, and looking fiercely at his son. "I do not fear you, most unnatural villain!"

"Well said, unnatural father!" cried Frederick, in a laughing tone; "then sit you down, and we'll converse. You need not fear me. You say I dare not punish you for all your guilt; and I say, *You lie.* I *dare;* BUT I WILL NOT. The time is past. You have not me to thank for it. Live, die, and be detested, when and where you please."

The words were grateful in my father's ear, hideous as they fell on mine. He lost dastard timidity with their utterance, and acquired insolence and bluster. Secure of life, he had no motive to withhold his abuse, and it spirted out, as usual, upon the head of the powerless and innocent. He aimed his shafts at the coffin of my scarcely buried mother. Alas! he knew not the holiness with which that mother's memory was enshrined, even in the heart of the irreligious and much-offending Frederick.

"You have had a good instructress!" was the ready sarcasm. "Your mother"——

"Name her not!" shrieked Frederick; the blood rushing from his cheek at the same moment, leaving it pale, ghastly, and fearful to behold. "Name her not. I dare not name her. I dare not trust myself to listen to the sound."

"She was punished for the usage I received from her, and so will you be, and so will she," continued he, pointing spitefully at me. "You will be smitten both, as she was smitten, when I cursed her for her cruelty—vilest of wretches, as she was."

"Be warned!" cried Frederick, swelling with anger, and struggling for composure, which he could not find. "Be warned, I say! Speak to him, Emma—save us both!"

"Warned! warned!" said the roused lunatic, presuming on the assurance he had received. "Who threatens me? Do you remind me of the past? I have not forgotten it. The curse will wither the hand that was uplifted against your father, as it has visited and destroyed her who bore the miscreant, and taught him lessons that will avail him when he pines in hell. She was born to be my plague; and I glory in my deliverance. Were she here again, again would I be quit of her. I hated and despised her. I have lived to trample on her grave!"

He said more than this—more than I desire to remember or record. He persisted in the same strain, associating the most disgusting epithets with my mother's name, and outrunning sense in his eagerness to vilify her. Drunken, unmeaning gibberish supplied him with terms that would have excited ridicule and compassion within the breast of any one but him who listened to the speaker, enraged and irritated until reason was immersed, and could no longer serve him. One horrible expression, too infamous to be repeated, was fatal to them both. It was but half uttered before Frederick leaped from his seat, and seized his fellow-drunkard and his father by the throat. The latter fell, and his assailant with him. One shrieked with terror,

and struggled furiously, the other foamed, and held the prostrate man down with a hand of iron. I saw no more, but ran from the apartment, screaming aloud for help, and about to fall with fright and agitation.

The servants had asked permission to leave home at the close of dinner, in order to visit the grave of their mistress, before it should be finally and for ever shut. It was a request that had its origin in affection, and I complied with it at once. They had been faithful and true friends—for years had shared the affliction of my mother; and on her account had borne anger and submitted to reproach. We were about to lose them now. Ingots of gold would not have purchased their services for my widowed father. They had already set out on their errand of love, and the house was deserted. No one there could help me, and I flew into the village. Within a hundred yards of the parsonage I encountered old Adam. He was the family confident, and in a few words I made the miserable business known to him. The poor fellow quickened, as well as he might, his aged feet, and, full of useless regrets and ineffective guesses, accompanied me to our abode.

"Oh, miss," said he, "why did the young gentleman return? What a pity he didn't keep at school! I should say no mischief has taken place. What is your opinion? Oh, to be sure, it was the maddest trick that could be played—just running into danger. Dear me, dear me, how thoughtless we all are! You

don't mean to say, miss, that you left them on the ground, and fighting too! Your brother could never be so sacrilegious as to strike a man in orders! If he was wicked enough to insult his father, he must respect the cloth. Dear me, dear me! pardon me, Miss Harrington, yours is a remarkably unpleasant family."

We reached the house in time to meet Frederick rushing from it vehemently. He had a wild and vacant look, and he was paler than ever. Old Adam retreated a step or two as the wretched youth approached him. Frederick took no notice of him, but seized my hand, which was steadier than his own, and spoke to me, panting for breath.

"You are a witness, Emma," he exclaimed, "I implored him to be quiet. You heard me. He would not. He has himself to thank for it. Oh, the accursed drink! It is the ruin of us all. I vowed that I would use no violence—that I would not be angry, I promised you faithfully; for your sake it was right. The wine betrayed me—set me in flames. Oh, Emma, Emma!" he cried out, bursting into tears, "what is to become of you? What is to be done? All gone—all gone!" I endeavoured to pacify him. "No, no," he cried, putting me gently from him; "you mustn't kiss me now. Enter there—there—in that room, don't curse your brother, Emma. I will spare you one trial—you shall not see me on the gal-

lows ! Good-by—poor girl—I did not mean it, Emma, It was the drink—the drink !"

We did not permit him to proceed. Horrified by his words, I started from him. Adam had already preceded me, and we entered the dining-room at one and the same moment. *He was a corpse.* There, on the floor where I had left him, he lay a motionless clod.

Stukely, receive the command of a dying woman, and hold it sacred. Do not shun and utterly discard the drunkard of your acquaintance. Have pity on him, and shock his ear with the unparalleled but faithful history of his fellow mortal. The sight stupified me; I hurried from it, and went to join the—assassin ! He was gone. He had fled—whither ? Ah, whither could he flee, friendless in the world and alone ? I returned to the house. Adam met me on the threshold. His eyes were full of tears. He took me by the hand—closed the door, and locked it. He was very much alarmed, but he tried to keep calm.

" Miss Harrington," said he, " may God forgive me for what I am about to do ! The servants, you say, are out ? "

" They are."

" How long will they be absent ? "

" I cannot tell you, Adam. They may be returning now."

"We have no time to lose, then. You must not speak of this. Oh! we are doing wrong, Miss Harrington; but I am a weak old man, and hardly know indeed the right from the wrong. I pity you. Don't betray your brother. Don't let your lips sentence him to death. I have looked well about him. There's not a mark. Every one knew your father's ailment. A sudden death will not surprise the world. It has been long expected. It is a dreadful situation to be placed in, but what are we to do? Do you understand me, miss? Hark—there's some one walking up the avenue. Fly! fly! unlock the door; and oh, do not let them hear you for the world!"

I ran with speed. The domestics had come home. I joined them on the lawn, and, reckless of all consequences, I spoke the falsehood. In less than an hour it was spread through the whole village. The parsonage was thronged with applicants and visitors. Adam was with me for my support. Not one presumed to doubt the tale. It corresponded with the universal expectation. Many wondered why it had not happened many years before. Some had remarked, during the day, the curious look that the parson carried with him, and had all but said he wouldn't see the night out. An inquest was held upon the body. I kept my room that day. The coroner would not distress the lady's feelings by requesting her to be present at the inquisition. The jury concurred in the propriety of this forbearance; "for indeed," the foreman said, on behalf

of all the rest, "the melancholy case was but too clear." So deemed the coroner, and so the world. The verdict was returned, and registered, and declared most wise by every one—Mr Harrington HAD DIED *of apoplexy.*

"I remember the inquest well," said Mr Clayton, laying down the manuscript for a moment: "I read the report of it, and call to mind an observation that was made by a juryman respecting the youth himself. You will hardly believe, that reading that account, as an uninterested person and a stranger, a suspicion crossed me unfavourable to the son. I was more than half afraid that he was connected in some way with his father's death. How strangely do things come about!"

"What misery was here, sir!"

"Yes, you will hardly smile at the wine-bibber after the perusal of such a history. Let us conclude the tale."

The obituary (continued the narrative of Miss Harrington) announced my father's death. I could trace the hand of Adam in the composition of the precious memorandum. Thus it ran:—"*Died on Wednesday last,* SUDDENLY OF APOPLEXY, AND UNIVERSALLY RESPECTED (!), *the Reverend Arthur Harrington, rector of ——— in Kent.*" In a few days the circumstance of the minister's death

was forgotten—he was no more thought of. The young proprietor was about to be ordained, and to return to his cure. The parishioners looked forward to his arrival. The affairs of my father were wound up. It was no difficult matter. He had left behind him little more than was enough to purchase his interment. The whole of his handsome fortune had been dissipated, squandered, and lost, in the encouragement of his fatal passion, and in the blind recklessness which it had engendered and supported. He had mortgaged, borrowed, and sold, until his income could scarcely meet the claims which were in existence against him. His very furniture had become the property of another; and for the last three years of his life, the generosity and good feeling of a creditor alone permitted him to enjoy the use of it. I was left in the world literally penniless. A few jewels of my mother, of inconsiderable value, and my own clothes, were every thing that I possessed. With these I quitted the parsonage, and, for the emergency, retreated to the cottage of an humble but kind-hearted woman in the village. She was now my truest friend. Indeed, I had no other in the world. My sudden extreme poverty had made manifest a hundred faults that were not visible before, and every virtuous eye was glad to look another way, and not be wounded with the sight of them. I resolved to go to service, the last resource of the abandoned daughters of the improvident. My education had not

been of a high order; still, I had not been wholly neglected. My mother had been for years my teacher, and I had profited under her patience and instruction. I would endeavour to find employment as a governess; but, failing this, pride should not prevent me from becoming a servant-maid. I needed peace and freedom from my own thoughts. These secured, it mattered little how and whence they were obtained. I had arranged to go to London, that great mart and centre of assiduous life, and it wanted but a day to the period fixed for my departure. My kind hostess gave me a volume of advice, and prepared me for the great struggle into which I was about to cast myself; pointed out the dangers of my condition, and laid down rules of conduct which it was indispensable for me to follow if I hoped for comfort and success. It was on this day, and at the moment of her enforcing her good counsel, that a visitor arrived to aid us with his best wishes and experience. It was Mr Temple.

He had read the account of my father's dissolution, and he had not lost a minute in offering his condolence and assistance at the trying season. It was a benevolent act on the part of my brother's friend, and I thanked him for his consideration. "It was not worth my thanks," he answered, and at the same time he asked for Frederick.

"He is gone," was my reply; "whither I cannot tell you."

"What, left you!" he exclaimed, as if indignant at the thought; "left you here, alone, at such a time! It is impossible, Miss Harrington—a stranger could not do it. Surely he is ignorant of his father's death. He cannot be so insensible to duty. I will not believe it of the man to whom I have given my friendship and my heart. Nature could never wrong herself so far. Is this true, good lady?" he enquired, turning to the hostess.

"I don't wonder you're surprised, sir," was the reply. "You are a gentleman of feeling. Indeed, it is true, sir, though incredible to believe. The day his father died, sir, he left the premises, and hasn't been nigh, nor by, sir, ever since."

"I will not believe it—for I cannot. Instinct in animals is not to be suppressed, and has its claims and laws from which it will not fail. The heart of man cannot do violence to itself. Love will never be restrained."

"Ah, how beautifully you talk, sir!" said my friend. "I quite enjoy to hear you. But what I say is true. Master Harrington is gone away, and young miss is all alone."

"No, my good woman, not alone! Pardon me, Miss Harrington, if, in the absence of your brother, I assume a brother's privilege. Pray, confide in me. Can I help you? Let me be of service to you. Deal frankly with me. Let me see you placed comfortably

and happily in life; it is all I ask—I require. I say too much perhaps. In truth I hardly know what I say or do. I can never forget the interest that was excited in my bosom by our first interview. I am agitated now by what you tell me of your brother—by what I see of your lonely, perilous condition. Do not think me overbold and impertinent, if I ask you of your circumstances? Are you provided for? Are you independent?"

"I have no reason to blush, sir, when I acknowledge to you, that I am at this moment relying for my bread upon the friendship and bounty of this kind person. My father has died insolvent, and I am without a home."

"Miss Harrington, you alarm and agitate me beyond expression! I was not prepared for this communication—it has taken me by surprise! This charitable lady must not go unrewarded. Take this from me," he said, addressing her, and placing a guinea in her hand, "not in payment of what you have done—no money could discharge that obligation—but as a testimonial, slight as it is, of your beneficent and unworldly conduct. And tell me, Miss Harrington, I beseech you, what is it that you propose to do?"

"To go to London without delay, and seek a situation."

"A situation! In heaven's name, as what?"

"I am not particular," I replied. "I can use my

hands in many ways. I have no doubt that I shall meet with one to which I can accommodate myself without much difficulty or repugnance."

Mr Temple paced the room in great uneasiness of mind.

"No, no. I must not permit it," he said at length. "Fate has brought me here, that I might arrogate to myself the right to act on your behalf which a brother has renounced. You would sink under the degradation and indignities to which you are about to expose yourself. It must not be. I cannot allow it. Do not be hasty—do not act without forethought and consideration. Permit me to consider for you. Surely there are many ways of providing for you suitably to your education and cultivated mind. I have many friends—they would be proud to serve you. Indeed, to whom would it not be an honour to save loveliness from contumely and insult?"

I am a woman. I was then a girl, by nature susceptible of flattery, and, from my cruel situation, unused to the accents of tenderness and respect. The terms in which Mr Temple addressed me, flattered and gently agitated, but did not displease me. I was grateful for the warm interest which he evinced in favour of a friendless orphan; and his handsome, manly countenance, could not tend to diminish the impression that his generosity had wrought. My truant woman's heart already encouraged half-formed visions, the secret sight of which crimsoned my cheek,

making it blush with fear and maiden shame. I endeavoured to dismiss them; but, alas! could I be insensible to the fact, which was apparent in every word he uttered? It was impossible to avoid the conviction, that a feeling deeper than that of ordinary philanthropy had been excited in his heart, and that I was an object of his passionate love no less than of his compassion. To have resolved to decline all favours at his hands at the moment of making this discovery, would have been the step of prudence and of duty. I did not take it. It was not that my vanity was gratified and my better judgment overborne. Loneliness and desertion, which stared me in the face, heightened and improved the hope that I would scarcely trust myself to entertain, and yet entertained with unbounded gratitude, towards the man who had inspired and emboldened it. It was difficult to find an answer to the tender entreaties of my kind adviser. In truth, I knew not what to say. I thanked him for his counsel, and acknowledged that I thought it well to act upon it—to delay my journey —and to consider well the many disadvantages that would accompany my sudden change of life. "If," I added in conclusion, "he would secure me the countenance and aid of his good friends in the prosecution of my object, he might feel assured that I would not willingly discredit his introduction."

"Do not talk so, Miss Harrington, I implore you," he replied. "You cannot conceive my agony and

distress. To see you reduced to the necessity of labouring for your livelihood, is more than I can calmly bear. Something must be done for you. I am so shocked by what I see and learn, that I find it hard to fix my thoughts. When I have recovered from the stupor, do not doubt but that I may devise some plan for your future life, that will be congenial to your tastes, and worthy the adoption of the best and fairest of her sex."

Mrs Wybrow, my simple-minded hostess, applied her white apron to her eyes, and wept copiously. "Ah, sir," said she, with feelings very much warmed, I fear, by the handsome present that she had received, "if all the young gentlemen in the world were like you, how different things would be! I am sure if Miss Harrington liked to live here for ever, she should be as welcome as the day is long. I have told her myself, that she is running too fast into this sort of thing; and as you say, sir, if she only waits a little, something may turn up quite *congealed* to her taste."

"Do you really not know where Frederick is?" asked Temple, after having kept silence for a time.

"I do not, indeed," I replied, and shuddered.

"Can you not guess?"

"I cannot."

"Have you any reason to believe that he will soon return?"

"I believe," I answered, shedding bitter tears, "that I shall never see him more."

"I am resolved," said Temple, in a determined tone—moved to it, as I imagined, by witnessing my tears—"I am resolved, Miss Harrington. I will go instantly to town, and see my friends. You cannot be in safer and in better company at present than with this kind and feeling lady. You shall shortly hear from me—sooner, perhaps, than you expect. I do not reckon too much on my influence and power, when I assure you that you shall be well provided for. The beginning of your life has not been happy. The end of it may be happiness to yourself, and to another"——

He hesitated, and gazed at me expressively. I blushed, and bent my head.

Mr Temple remained in the cottage until a late hour in the evening, when he departed in a chaise which he had hired to convey him to the neighbouring market town. The favourable estimate which I had formed of his character did not suffer by his behaviour during the day that he passed with us. His conversation was agreeable and animated. He had a hundred subjects at command, of which I had never heard, and to which his appropriate language and his fervour gave a charm as resistless as it was injurious. Now he played with Mrs Wybrow's children, gave them pence, promised toys, submitted

to be beaten, cried in joke, and performed a host of tricks to make the young ones scream with joy, and to seduce the easy and maternal heart of Mrs Wybrow. Then he read to me, produced a book, his constant fellow-traveller and best friend—a book of plays—glowing, it is true, with high and passionate poetry, but startling the delicate and unaccustomed ear by the boldness of its subjects, and the freedom as well as laxity of its expression. I should have deemed the perusal of that work unlawful, had not the unhesitating tone of Mr Temple—the absence of all constraint as he spoke the passages, given a stamp to them that, to my inexperienced jndgment, entitled them to currency. Had they been wrong to hear, he never would have read them. His memory, too, was stored with verses—short poems, breathing love, and sanctioning a liberty of thought and action that was not always limited; or if so, not too strictly. These he poured insidiously into my willing ear, carrying them to their destination with the voice of trembling passion, and the look of melting love that was not to be mistaken. He took his leave at length; and his departure was the signal for panegyrics, which the middle-aged, but still inexperienced Mrs Wybrow, had been yearning to deliver for many hours before.

"Well, he is indeed," said she, "the picture of a gentleman. It's no use disguising it, he's over head and ears in love. I couldn't help thinking, as he sat

down there, what a pretty couple you would make. He's fit for you, Miss Harrington, and you're deserving on him. My stars, what a clever man he is! How he talks! Why, how many books should you think he has got by heart? And isn't he liberal. Only think of giving me a guinea, and the brats about eighteenpence a-piece—quite a fortune for 'em. Now, I should say, he's gone to London to see about no sitiation at all, but just to ask his father leave to marry you, and to make arrangements for the wedding. I don't know what you may think, miss, but if I was a queen—now that would be just the man that I should fancy."

Her praises were not displeasing to me, although I did not tell her so. She spoke during the evening, and until late that night, of little else than Mr Temple, and I feigned to ply my needle most industriously, whilst I hugged in silence every syllable to my heart, and lost myself in a bright world of fancy, more beautiful and less substantial than the wildest dream of night. For the succeeding week, the subject of our conversation was the same, and lost nothing of its interest and pleasantness. At the end of the week, the following note, reached me through the post:—

"My Dear Miss Harrington,—Permit me to address you thus familiarly, although I have not yet the pleasure of your personal acquaintance. I have heard of your misfortunes, and affliction commands

our sympathy and regard even for a stranger. But a stranger you are not. My son, from whom I have heard the unfortunate history of your life, is well known to your brother, and slightly, I believe, to yourself. He is ardent, and has pleaded your cause with a warmth that was not to be resisted, had I been unwilling to listen to the claim that your case was justified in making upon the good feeling of one of your own sex. Would that it were in my power to offer you more than a quiet, comfortable home. James has acquainted me with your desire of becoming a governess. My children need an instructress and a friend—are you willing to become both to them? If so, let your reply to this letter be your appearance at our house. I will meet you as a daughter, and endeavour to make amends for your late sufferings and many trials. Come, and I will receive you with open arms. I am anxious to serve you. The coach which leaves —— on Saturday next, will bring you to the *Golden Key* Inn, in Fleet Street. Any person there will direct you to our residence, and a hackney coach will convey you to it. If you are silent, and I do not see you on the day I mention, I shall conclude that you have already obtained employment. If you have not been so successful, permit me to be of service to you.—Believe me, my dear Miss Harrington,

"Your sincere friend,

"Agnes Temple.

"Queen Square, London."

Before I had half finished this epistle, the white apron of Mrs Wybrow was handled with very nervous fingers, and was at last called to its usual work—the work, in fact, for which it seemed that it was put on and worn; viz. the cleansing of her eyes. She was completely overcome by the terms of the letter; and as she had but one way of expressing joy and sorrow, she sobbed until I had finished, and she could speak.

"Well, miss," said she, "gentle-folks have the perlitest, nicest way in life of saying things! It's as good as a sermon to read that letter. I am so glad on your account, you cannot think, Miss Harrington"——

Words were superfluous to good Mrs Wybrow. Feeling did all for her. She stopped, and cried, and then once more attempted—

"It's a long lane, Miss Harrington, that has no end. I was sure that it would all be settled. Oh, how happy you will be! Now, I'll tell you what I must do. I must make some of them nice cakes that you are so very fond of, and you can take them up for the dear little children. Oh, I daresay, they are beauties! Then Mr Temple liked our cream so; there'll be a pint of that; and then we'll find something for the old lady herself. What should you say to one of them sides of bacon—that streaky side? I'll warrant you, that will eat delicious."

I did not write in answer to this letter. I did not consider. My heart was too full of gratitude to

indulge for a moment the thought of wrong. What wrong could there be in such voluntary goodness? The shadow of suspicion did not darken the fair prospect that was now before me. The Saturday arrived. I had made every arrangement for my departure during the intervening days. Mrs Wybrow had loaded me with her humble presents. I bade her affectionately farewell. I was on my journey. I arrived in London. We reached the inn. The first face that I beheld there was that of James Temple. He awaited the arrival of the coach, and he assisted me to alight. He looked pale and anxious, and the smile with which he greeted me lacked the smallest cheerfulness. He bowed, but did not speak. I was led into a private apartment by a waiter at the inn. My luggage followed me. All was hurry and confusion. Mr Temple had not yet presented himself. "He has sent, no doubt," thought I, "for the hackney coach." How grieved I was to see him looking ill. There was a gentle knock at the door. I requested the visitor to enter, and Mr Temple presented himself. He looked worse than ever; there was a wildness about him that I could not understand; he was perplexed and excited, and he evidently wished to say something that his mind would not permit him calmly to utter.

"Miss Harrington," he said, at length, "I am the most unfortunate, the most miserable being in existence."

"What has happened?" I asked alarmed.

"Miss Harrington," he repeated, "you cannot be insensible to the existence of a passion, which at this moment possesses and consumes me. I have made it evident to you in a hundred ways. I could not conceal it from you. We are not master of ourselves. I saw you and loved—ardently loved you. From the moment that I beheld you, your image has followed me by night and day, sleeping or waking—wheresoever I have been."

I was terrified by his vehemence, and the suddenness of his declaration; but I had not a word to speak.

"Do not despise me for this behaviour," he continued, "but listen, I implore you, to what I have to say. Before you hate me, hear and pity me. I left you, and returned immediately to London. I told your history to my mother; she was deeply moved at the recital, and the result was the invitation to her house which has led to your present visit, and to this interview, which I would have given worlds to purchase. She knew not then of the love that I bore towards the object of her compassion. She knows it now; and oh—miserable wretch that I am!—refuses you admittance to her house."

"Oh, what have I done, sir?" I asked instinctively.

"Nothing," answered Temple; "nothing that does not redound to your honour, and adorn the beauty that nature has lavished unsparingly upon you. But my mother is unthinking. She doats upon me, and

persuades herself that I have fallen into the hands of a designing woman."

My cheek burned with indignation; I was about to reply, but Mr Temple checked me.

"Ah, Miss Harrington!" he continued; "it is because I know you are the best and most artless, as you are the loveliest of your sex, that I am driven mad by the cruel insinuations of my mother. I know you. She does not. The sight of you would carry conviction to her heart, as it has filled mine with unspeakable and unbounded love."

"Let me return to the cottage," I said in agitation: "I shall be very happy with Mrs Wybrow until I obtain a situation. I will return at once."

"Miss Harrington," exclaimed my lover, falling upon his knees, "do not pronounce my death-warrant! Emma, dear Emma! for you are dearer to me than life itself—I have revealed my passion to you—do not treat it lightly. Drive me not to an act which you will never cease to lament and mourn. Do you hate me? Do you regard me with indifference? Say but the word, and I will molest you no longer. I will drag myself from your presence, and finish my wretched existence far, far away from you. Let me be satisfied of that."

I did not answer.

"Dearest Emma," he continued, "I am not indifferent to you. That blush assures me I am not. Your silence speaks more eloquently than words.

Then do not leave me. Listen to me, and be merciful. The sudden anger of my mother will abate. The natural goodness of her heart will return, and no one more bitterly than herself will regret the hasty determination which she has formed. She will ask your pardon, and acknowledge that she has done you injustice. All I ask, implore you, is to permit her present feeling to subside. Be sure it will do so. Remain here for a few days. Why not here as well as in the country? For the sake of one whose happiness, whose life depends upon your decision, comply with the request. In a day or two—perhaps to-morrow—all hindrances may be removed, and the present trial will be remembered only to enhance our real felicity. I know my mother. She is passionate, but she is loving and good at heart, and would not injure the worm beneath her feet."

He remained upon his knees. He continued to entreat—the protestations of his ardent passion were reiterated. What was the friendless and unprotected girl to do? What had she to say whose heart was already touched, whose reason was ensnared and bound? I consented to remain at the inn for a few days—but for a few days only. This was a stipulation. Temple was overjoyed and grateful for what he termed the act of considerate love; and he told me that every thing should be done for me to render my temporary stay agreeable and cheerful, and not a moment should be lost in effecting a removal from

the place, and an alteration in his mother's views. The subject was then dropped. Temple saw that I needed refreshment. He rang the bell, and requested the man who answered it to prepare a dinner for—his *sister*. The waiter bowed obsequiously and went away, and then I remonstrated against the falsehood that he had spoken.

"It must be done, dear Emma," he replied, "to secure civility and respect. Who suffers by my saying so? Besides, are you not my sister? Am I not your brother? Have I not pledged myself to assume that sacred office, and do a brother's duty by you?"

Stukely, vouchsafe me now your pity, and withhold your scorn. I cannot chronicle the daily steps that led to my disgrace. You have guessed already that the letter was a forgery. It was. Is it strange that I did not suspect it until my ruin gave a new colouring to that and every other thing? It may be so. It is strange, perhaps, that a word spoken against the man on whose integrity and faith I would have staked my life—and did my honour—would have roused indignant unbelief. But so it is. I remained at the hotel for a week. New obstacles arose—difficulties increased. The heart of Mrs Temple was obdurate. She still denied me admission to her house. Why did I not return to ——? Because the tempter would not have it so. His love increased in proportion to my hardships. He could not live without me.

Destruction should follow my refusal of his hand. Well, I did not refuse it. I consented to become his wife. Why did I not? I tell you, because the tempter would not have it so. The declaration of his love—his goodness—his ardour—his respectful manner—his zealous endeavours to administer to my comfort and peace of mind—his manly form—his handsome countenance—his gentlemanly bearing—these were not lost upon me. My heart succumbed. I loved him passionately. His presence became necessary to my happiness. I was dull and melancholy if he were away. I could think of nothing else. It was bliss to have him at my side—imprisonment to dwell without him. I have said enough. What will not woman do for the man she trusts—in whom she collects the fulness of her ripe affections! I was at the mercy of your fellow man. What inhuman monster ever profited so savagely by opportunity? I FELL.

I have asked your pity. You will not accord it; for you know my later history, and there exists the crime committed against yourself, that can never be blotted out or pardoned. Months of unkindness—for unkindness followed possession quickly—did not entirely extinguish the love I felt for my betrayer. I accompanied him to Cambridge. It was there that he opened his door, and bade me seek amongst men a better friend than he could now afford to be. It was there and then that I first saw you; and the

horror that I felt of being thrown upon the world, reconciled me to the crime of listening to your love. I have been punished for the act, and I have lived to repent it. Stukely ! do not curse my memory. May Heaven bless and protect you ! My last prayer is for your happiness, and for the welfare of the sinful and most wretched boy, who wanders through the world with the guilt of blood upon his soul—a father's blood ! "

The history was finished. Mr Clayton closed the manuscript, and we were both for many minutes silent.

Oh, wine, wine ! whose praises are so clamorously rung around the festive board, and whose virtues supply the song with brilliant thoughts and ardent syllables, what need of eloquence and verse to sound thy fame, whilst *murder* and *seduction* bear ghastly witness to thy potency ! Is there a greater crime than these ? Name it, and Drunkenness shall claim it for a child !

END OF VOL. II.

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